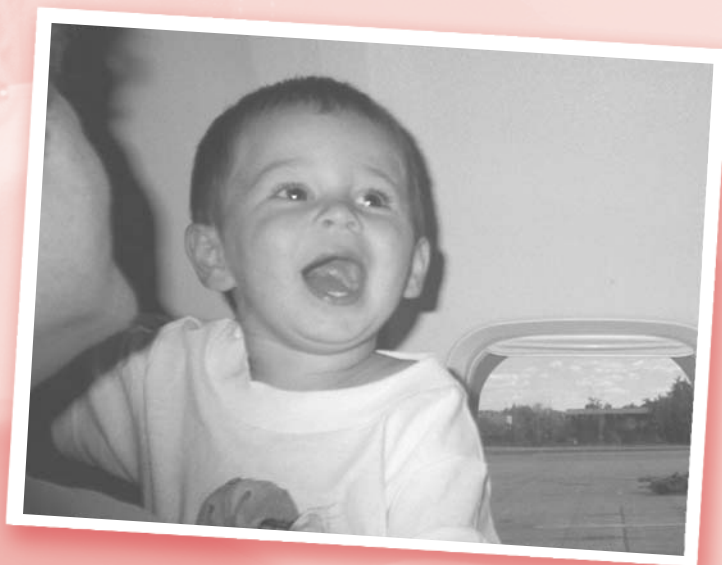


# America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2005



# America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2005



# Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics

---



The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics was founded in 1994. Executive Order No. 13045 formally established it in April 1997 to foster coordination and collaboration in the collection and reporting of Federal data on children and families. Forum agencies as of Spring 2005 are listed below.

**Department of Agriculture**

Food and Nutrition Service  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov>

**Department of Commerce**

U.S. Census Bureau  
<http://www.census.gov>

**Department of Defense**

Defense Manpower Data Center  
<http://mfrc.calib.com>

**Department of Education**

Institute of Education Sciences  
National Center for Education Statistics  
<http://nces.ed.gov>

**Department of Health and Human Services**

Administration for Children and Families  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov>

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
<http://www.ahrq.gov>

Maternal and Child Health Bureau  
<http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov>

National Center for Health Statistics  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development  
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov>

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation  
[http://aspe.hhs.gov/\\_/index.cfm](http://aspe.hhs.gov/_/index.cfm)

**Department of Housing and Urban Development**

Office of Policy Development and Research  
<http://www.huduser.org>

**Department of Justice**

Bureau of Justice Statistics  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>

National Institute of Justice  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp>

**Department of Labor**

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
<http://www.bls.gov>

Women's Bureau  
<http://www.dol.gov/wb>

**Department of Transportation**

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

**Environmental Protection Agency**

Office of Environmental Information  
<http://www.epa.gov>

**National Science Foundation**

Division of Science Resources Statistics  
<http://www.nsf.gov/statistics>

**Office of Management and Budget**

Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg>

---

Recommended citation: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005*. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

This report was printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office in cooperation with the National Center for Health Statistics, July 2005.

Single copies are available through the Health Resources and Services Administration Information Center while supplies last: P.O. Box 2910, Merrifield, VA 22116; Toll-Free Lines: 1-888-Ask-HRSA, TTY: 1-877-4TY-HRSA; Fax: 703-821-2098; E-mail: [ask@hrsa.gov](mailto:ask@hrsa.gov). The report is also available on the World Wide Web at <http://childstats.gov>.

# Table of Contents

---

Foreword.....	iii
Acknowledgments .....	iv
About This Report.....	v
Highlights .....	vii
Summary List of Indicators .....	x

## **Part I: Population and Family Characteristics..... 1**

Child Population .....	3
Children as a Proportion of the Population .....	4
Racial and Ethnic Composition .....	5
Children of at Least One Foreign-Born Parent .....	6
Difficulty Speaking English .....	7
Family Structure and Children’s Living Arrangements.....	8
Births to Unmarried Women .....	10
Child Care.....	12
Children’s Environments .....	14
Data Needed.....	16

## **Part II: Indicators of Children’s Well-Being..... 17**

<b>Economic Security Indicators</b> .....	17
Child Poverty and Family Income.....	18
Secure Parental Employment.....	20
Housing Problems.....	21
Food Security and Diet Quality .....	22
Access to Health Care .....	24
Indicators Needed.....	26
<b>Health Indicators</b> .....	27
General Health Status.....	28
Activity Limitation .....	29
Overweight .....	30
Childhood Immunization.....	31
Low Birthweight.....	32
Infant Mortality .....	33
Child Mortality .....	34
Adolescent Mortality.....	36
Adolescent Births .....	38
Indicators Needed.....	39

---

<b>Behavior and Social Environment Indicators.....</b>	<b>41</b>
Regular Cigarette Smoking .....	43
Alcohol Use .....	44
Illicit Drug Use .....	45
Youth Victims and Perpetrators of Serious Violent Crimes .....	46
Indicators Needed.....	48
<b>Education Indicators.....</b>	<b>49</b>
Family Reading to Young Children.....	50
Early Childhood Care and Education .....	51
Mathematics and Reading Achievement .....	52
High School Academic Coursetaking.....	54
High School Completion.....	55
Youth Neither Enrolled in School Nor Working .....	56
Higher Education .....	57
Indicator Needed.....	58
 <b>Special Features .....</b>	 <b>59</b>
Asthma .....	60
Lead in the Blood of Children .....	61
Parental Reports of Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties .....	62
 <b>Special Section .....</b>	 <b>63</b>
Family Structure and Children’s Well-Being.....	65
Family Structure and Infant Well-Being .....	66
Family Structure and Adolescent Well-Being.....	68
 <b>Notes to Indicators .....</b>	 <b>73</b>
 <b>Appendices .....</b>	 <b>83</b>
Appendix A: Detailed Tables .....	83
Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions .....	173



## Foreword

---

**I**n 1994, the Office of Management and Budget joined with six other Federal agencies to create the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. Formally established in April 1997 through Executive Order No. 13045, the Forum was called upon to develop priorities for collecting enhanced data on children and youth, improve the reporting and dissemination of information on the status of children to the policy community and the general public, and produce more complete data on children at the State and local levels. The Forum, which now has participants from 20 Federal agencies as well as partners in private research organizations, fosters coordination, collaboration, and integration of Federal efforts to collect and report data on conditions and trends for children and families.

*America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005* is a compendium of indicators—drawn from the most reliable official statistics—illustrative of both the promises and the difficulties confronting our Nation's young people. The report presents 25 key indicators on important aspects of children's lives. These indicators are easy to understand by broad audiences, objectively based on substantial research connecting them to reliable data on child well-being, balanced so that no single area of children's lives dominates the report, measured regularly so that they can be updated to show trends over time, and representative of large segments of the population rather than one particular group.

As has been the case in previous volumes, this report includes a Population and Family Characteristics section that provides key contextual measures, followed by sections that present key indicators in four domains—Economic Security, Health, Behavior and Social Environment, and Education. This year's report reflects several significant improvements. First, the Forum staff has focused on improvements in consistency of layout and format across measures in the report. Second, a few data sources for particular indicators have been changed to provide more regularly updated data than in the past. And third, there are three special features and a special section. Two of the special features—percentage of children with asthma and percentage of children with specified blood lead levels—update previous special features that were published several years ago. The third special feature is parental reports of children's

emotional and behavioral difficulties. This indicator seeks to address a data gap—mental health of children—noted in previous volumes of *America's Children*. Last, this report includes a special section on family structure that highlights this important dimension in the well-being of children.

Each volume of *America's Children* highlights critical data gaps and challenges Federal statistical agencies to do better. Forum agencies are meeting that challenge by working to provide more comprehensive and consistent information on the condition and progress of our Nation's children. Since the last full report (*America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*), Forum agencies have continued efforts to strengthen some indicators and to close critical data gaps, particularly in areas such as family structure and the mental health of children.

The value of the *America's Children* reports and the extraordinary cooperation they represent reflect the Forum's innovative, determined spirit to advance our understanding of where our children are today and what may be needed to bring them a better tomorrow. The Forum agencies should be congratulated once again this year for joining together to address their common goals: developing a truly comprehensive set of indicators on the well-being of America's children and ensuring that this information is readily accessible in both content and format. Their accomplishments reflect the dedication of the Forum agency staff members who coordinate the assessment of data needs, evaluate strategies to make data presentations more consistent, and work together to produce important publications and provide these products on the Forum's website: <http://childstats.gov>. Last but not least, none of this work would be possible without the continued cooperation of millions of American citizens who willingly provide the data that are summarized and analyzed by staff in the Federal agencies. We invite you to suggest ways in which we can enhance this annual portrait of the Nation's most valuable resource: its children. I applaud the Forum's collaborative efforts in producing this report and hope that our compendium will continue to be useful in your work.

**Katherine K. Wallman**  
*Chief Statistician*  
*Office of Management and Budget*

## Acknowledgments

---

**T**his report reflects the commitment of the members of the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. The report was written by the staff of the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, including: Shara Godiwalla, Staff Director of the Children's Forum; Susan Schechter, Office of Management and Budget; Tavia Simmons, U.S. Census Bureau; Susan Lukacs, National Center for Health Statistics; Patrick Rooney, National Center for Education Statistics; Daniel Axelrad and Belinda Hawkins, Environmental Protection Agency; Barry Steffen, Department of Housing and Urban Development; Caroline Harlow, Bureau of Justice Statistics; Jessica Campbell, National Institute on Drug Abuse; Naomi Goldstein, Administration for Children and Families; Tracy Von Ins, Food and Nutrition Service; Teri Morisi, Bureau of Labor Statistics; and Larry Wilkinson, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Members of the Mental Health Work Group who worked with the Forum staff and consultants to develop the special feature on children's emotional and behavioral difficulties were Karen Bourdon and Eve Mościcki, National Institute of Mental Health; Ronald Manderscheid, Center for Mental Health Services; Catherine Lesesne, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities; and Gloria Simpson, National Center for Health Statistics.

In addition to the report authors, active members of the Reporting Committee that guided development of the report included Linda Gordon, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; Robert Kominski, U.S. Census Bureau; Laura Chadwick and Martha

Moorehouse, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Health and Human Services; John Kiely, National Center for Health Statistics; Zahid Khawaja, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Jeff Evans and Lynne Casper, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Catherine Vladutiu, Maternal and Child Health Bureau; Richard Bavier, Office of Management and Budget; and Carrie Mulford, National Institute of Justice.

Other staff members of the Forum agencies provided data, developed indicators, or wrote parts of the report. They include Kelly Holder, Rose Kreider, Linda Mayberry, Julia Johnson, and Bernadette Proctor, U.S. Census Bureau; Ken Robertson, Rowena Johnson, and Khary Cook, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Peter Basiotis, Mark Lino, and Andrea Carlson, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion; Seth Chamberlain, Administration for Children and Families; Chris Chapman, National Center for Education Statistics; Manon Boudrealt, Robin Cohen, Cathy Duran, Donna Hoyert, T.J. Mathews, Cynthia Ogden, Patricia Pastor, and Stephanie Ventura, National Center for Health Statistics; Mark Nord, Economic Research Service; Devon Payne-Sturges, Tracey Woodruff, Alison Freeman, and Lee Tooty, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Valuable contributions to the report were made by Jennifer Madans, National Center for Health Statistics. In addition, Daniel Princiotta, Nana Kwakye, and Heather Block of the Education Statistics Services Institute assisted Forum staff in producing the report.

## About This Report

**T**he Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics' primary mission is to enhance and improve consistency in data collection on children and families. Also, the Forum aims to improve the reporting and dissemination of information on the status of children and families. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005* provides the Nation with a summary of national indicators of child well-being and monitors changes in these indicators over time. In addition to providing data in an easy-to-use, non-technical format, the purpose of the report is to stimulate discussions among policymakers and the public, exchanges between data providers and policy communities, and improvements in Federal data on children and families.

### Structure of the Report

*America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005* presents a selected set of key indicators of continuing interest that measure critical aspects of children's lives and are collected rigorously and regularly by Federal agencies. The Forum chose these indicators through careful examination of available data. In determining this list of key indicators, the Forum sought input from the Federal policy-making community, foundations, academic researchers, and State and local children's service providers. These indicators were chosen because they are:

- *Easy to understand* by broad audiences;
- *Objectively based* on substantial research connecting them to child well-being and using reliable data;
- *Balanced*, so that no single area of children's lives dominates the report;
- *Measured regularly*, so that they can be updated and show trends over time; and
- *Representative* of large segments of the population, rather than one particular group.

*America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2005* is designed to complement other, more technical or comprehensive reports produced by some of the Forum agencies. The report is divided into two parts. The first part of the report, *Population and Family Characteristics*, presents data that illustrate the changes during the past few decades in nine measures depicting the context of children's lives. These background measures provide basic information about children in the United States and the social and demographic changes occurring in the child population. The second part of the report, *Indicators of Children's Well-Being*, contains data on four key areas of child well-being: economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. Appendix A, Detailed Tables, presents tabulated data for each measure and additional detail not discussed in the

main body of the report. Appendix B, Data Source Descriptions, describes the sources and surveys used to generate the background measures and the indicators.

The report also presents special features and a special section. These offer an opportunity to present additional measures that either are not available with sufficient frequency to be considered as regular key indicators, are new regular measures that the Forum believes merit special attention when first introduced in the *America's Children* report, or provide more detailed information about a particular indicator or topic.

### Changes Since the 2003 Report

*America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005* is similar to the 2003 report both in format and content. Most of the indicators presented in 2003 have been updated with more recent data. The Forum has also worked to improve the report in a number of important ways. Specifically, changes reflect improvements in the availability of data for certain key indicators, clarification of a concept being measured, or substantive expansion of the indicator. For example, data sources were updated for the difficulty speaking English, environmental tobacco smoke, and mathematics and reading achievement measures, while new air quality standards were applied to the air quality measure. In addition, presentation of information in the report demonstrates greater consistency and standardization wherever possible.

#### *Data on Race and Ethnicity*

Most indicators in the 2005 *America's Children* report include data tabulated by race and ethnicity. In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued revised standards for data on race and ethnicity (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/1997standards.html>). Agencies were given a transition period to implement these revised standards, with all changes to take place by January 2003. Several important changes were included in this revision. First, the standards stated that when practical and feasible, respondents should be given the opportunity to self-report their race and ethnicity. Second, the standards stated that a two-question format is the preferred approach for collecting data on race and ethnicity and that when a two-question format is used, collecting data on Hispanic origin should come first, followed by a question on race. Third, the racial categories were expanded from four racial groups (American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, and White) to five racial groups (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White). And fourth, the standards stated that survey respondents should be given the opportunity to select one or more of the five



---

racial groups. These last two changes—expansion of the racial categories and the introduction of multiple race categories—have a direct impact on many of the indicators presented in this report, particularly with respect to trend analyses.

The data collection systems used in this report implemented the revised standards at different times. As a result, a consistent set of racial and ethnic groups cannot be used for all indicators even for the most current data years. Some indicators may still be reporting data using the “old” race categories, while many others are reporting recent data using the revised categories. It should also be noted that the use of the revised standards to collect racial and ethnic data does not assure that sample sizes will be sufficient to report data for all categories. As has always been the case, some indicators will have more detailed data on race and ethnicity than others. In addition, even if the revised standards have been implemented and sample sizes permit reporting, the same nomenclature is not used uniformly to distinguish between single race and multiple race groups. Users can consult footnotes at the end of the tables that describe how data were collected. Users are strongly encouraged to review the technical documentation associated with each data source to obtain information on how and when the 1997 standards were implemented and what impact this has had on the collection and reporting of data from that source. The Forum will continue to focus on improving the consistency of information across indicators and over time.

## Additional Data Needed

*America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005* identifies critical gaps in the data available on children and youth. It challenges the Nation as a whole—and the Federal statistical agencies in particular—to improve the monitoring of important areas of children’s lives. It also challenges Federal agencies to improve the timeliness with which information on children is made available to policymakers and the public. At the end of *Part I: Population and Family Characteristics* and at the end of

each section in *Part II: Indicators of Children’s Well-Being*, the report presents a description of child well-being data and measures in need of development. The lists include many important aspects of children’s lives for which regular indicators are lacking or are in development, such as children’s homelessness, long-term poverty, abuse and neglect, disability, and early development. Mental health is a data need that has been partially met as a Special Feature in this report. In some of these areas, the Forum is exploring ways to collect new measures and improve existing ones. In others, Forum agencies have successfully fielded surveys incorporating some new measures, but they are not yet available on a regular basis for monitoring purposes.

## For Further Information

There are several good places to obtain additional information on each of the indicators found in this report. First, for many of the indicators, Appendix A, Detailed Tables, contains additional detail not discussed in the main body of the report. For example, some tables show breakouts by gender, race and Hispanic origin, or another category. Second, Appendix B, Data Source Descriptions, contains information and descriptions of the sources and surveys used to generate the indicators, as well as information on how to contact the agency responsible for collecting the data or administering the relevant survey. Third, numerous publications of the Federal statistical agencies provide additional detail on each of the key indicators included in this report, as well as on scores of other indicators. Two such reports include *The Condition of Education*, published annually by the National Center for Education Statistics and *Health, United States*, published annually by the National Center for Health Statistics. Often these compendia contain additional details not reported in *America’s Children*. Finally, the Forum’s website, <http://childstats.gov>, contains data tables with additional years of data, when available, and links to Forum agency publications that often provide more detail about the indicators in this report.

## Highlights



*America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005* is a biennial report to the Nation on the condition of children in America. Nine contextual measures

describe the changing population, family, and environmental context in which children are living, and 25 indicators depict the well-being of children in the areas of economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. This year's report has special features on children with asthma, children with specified blood lead levels, and parental reports of children's emotional and behavioral difficulties. In addition, the report includes a special section on family structure and the well-being of children. Highlights from each section of the report follow.

### Part I: Population and Family Characteristics

- In 2003, there were 73 million children ages 0–17 in the United States, or 25 percent of the population, down from a peak of 36 percent at the end of the baby boom (1964). Children are projected to compose 24 percent of the total population in 2020.
- The racial and ethnic diversity of America's children continues to increase over time. In 2003, 60 percent of U.S. children were White-alone, non-Hispanic, 16 percent were Black-alone, and 4 percent were Asian-alone.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of Hispanic children has increased faster than that of any other racial and ethnic group, growing from 9 percent of the child population in 1980 to 19 percent in 2003.
- In 2004, 68 percent of children ages 0–17 lived with two married parents, down from 77 percent in 1980. After decreasing from 1980 to 1994, the percentage has remained stable at about 68–69 percent from 1994 to 2004.
- Between 1980 and 1994, the rate of childbearing by unmarried women rose sharply for women of all ages. For all age groups combined, this trend ended in 1994. Birth rates for unmarried teenagers have dropped considerably since 1994, while increases in rates for women in their twenties and older have slowed. In 2003, the overall birth rate was 45 births per 1,000 unmarried women ages 15–44.
- In 2003, 62 percent of children ages 0–17 lived in counties in which one or more of the Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards were exceeded, an improvement from 69 percent in 1999.

- Children's exposure to secondhand smoke, as indicated by blood cotinine levels, dropped between 1988–1994 and 1999–2002. Overall, 59 percent of children ages 4–11 had cotinine in their blood in 1999–2002, down from 88 percent in 1988–1994. In 2003, 11 percent of children ages 0–6 lived in homes where someone smoked regularly.

### Part II: Indicators of Children's Well-Being

#### *Economic Security Indicators*

- In 2003, 18 percent of all children ages 0–17 lived in poverty, whereas among children living in families, the poverty rate was 17 percent.
- The official poverty rate of children living in families below the poverty threshold has fluctuated since the early 1980s: it reached a high of 22 percent in 1993 and decreased to a low of 16 percent in 2000.
- In 2003, 89 percent of children had health insurance coverage at some point during the year. While government insurance coverage has continued its upward trend since 1999, the proportion of children covered by private health insurance has dropped since 2000, reversing the upward trend from 1994–1999.

#### *Health Indicators*

- The proportion of children ages 6–18 who were overweight increased from 6 percent in 1976–1980 to 16 percent in 1999–2002. Racial, ethnic, and gender disparities exist, such that in 1999–2002, Black-alone, non-Hispanic girls and Mexican American boys were at particularly high risk of being overweight (23 percent and 27 percent, respectively).<sup>1</sup>
- While still near its record low, the infant mortality rate increased in 2002 for the first time in decades. The rate was 7.0 deaths per 1,000 live births, up from a rate of 6.8 in 2001. A special analysis showed that most of the increase was due to an increase in the number of infants weighing less than 750 grams, or about 1 lb. 10 oz. Racial and ethnic disparities persist, with the Black, non-Hispanic infant mortality rate consistently higher than that of other racial or ethnic groups.
- Child mortality dropped by approximately half between 1980 and 2002 among children ages 1–4 (from 64 to 31 deaths per 100,000 children) and among children ages 5–14 (from 31 to 17 deaths per 100,000 children).

- Deaths from firearm injuries among adolescents declined between 1995 and 2002, particularly among Black and Hispanic males. For example, from 1995 to 2002, the firearm homicide rate declined from 101 to 48 deaths per 100,000 Black males and from 47 to 22 deaths per 100,000 Hispanic males.
- The birth rate for adolescents continued to decline in 2003 to 22 births per 1,000 females ages 15–17, representing the lowest rate ever recorded. The decrease in adolescent births is apparent for all racial and ethnic groups and is notable among Black adolescents. The birth rate among Black, non-Hispanic females ages 15–17 dropped by more than half between 1991 and 2003 (from 86 to 39 births per 1,000), completely reversing the increase from 1986 to 1991.

### *Behavior and Social Environment Indicators*

- Following several years of gradual decreases, the rate of daily smoking remained stable between 2003 and 2004; in 2004, 4 percent of 8th-graders, 8 percent of 10th-graders, and 16 percent of 12th-graders reported smoking cigarettes daily in the previous 30 days.
- The percentage of students who reported having five or more drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks was stable from 2003 to 2004 at 11 percent among 8th-graders, 22 percent among 10th-graders, and 29 percent among 12th-graders.
- Between 2003 and 2004, illicit drug use (in the past 30 days) significantly declined from 10 percent to 8 percent among 8th-graders.
- Serious violent crime involving juvenile victims and offenders went up between 2002 and 2003. In 2003, 18 per 1,000 juveniles were victims of serious violent crimes—that is, homicide, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery—and 15 per 1,000 juveniles were reported by victims to have committed such crimes. These rates increased from those in 2002, when 10 per 1,000 youth were victims of serious crimes and 11 per 1,000 juveniles were identified as offenders. However, rates still generally declined from their peaks in 1993 of 44 victims per 1,000 youth and 52 offending youth per 1,000 juveniles.

### *Education Indicators*

- The average mathematics scale score of 4th- and 8th-graders was higher in 2003 than in all previous National Assessment of Educational Progress assessments since the series began in 1990. In reading, the 2003 4th-grade scale score was not measurably different from the scale score in 1992, the first year of the reading assessment series. The

8th-grade reading scale score declined 1 point from 2002 to 2003, but the 2003 scale score was higher than in 1992.

- The proportion of Black-alone, non-Hispanic youth who were neither in school nor working was 10 percent in 2004, down from 12 percent in 2003. More Black-alone, non-Hispanic youth moved from the category “not enrolled in school and not working” into the category of “enrolled in school and not working” in 2004 (not shown in table ED6.A).<sup>1</sup>
- White-alone, non-Hispanic persons ages 25–29 in 2003 were more likely to have earned at least a bachelor’s degree (32 percent) than their Black-alone, non-Hispanic (18 percent) and Hispanic (12 percent) peers. The percentage of Black-alone, non-Hispanic persons with at least a bachelor’s degree increased from 12 percent in 1980, and the percentage of Hispanic persons with at least a bachelor’s degree increased from 8 percent in 1980.<sup>1</sup>

### *Special Features*

- In 2003, about 13 percent of children had been diagnosed with asthma at some time in their lives, about 9 percent of children were reported to currently have asthma, and about 6 percent of children had one or more asthma attacks in the previous year. From 1997–2003, the trends for these three asthma indicators have remained fairly stable; however, between 1980 and 1995, childhood asthma, as measured using different indicators, more than doubled.
- In 1999–2002, less than 2 percent of children ages 1–5 had blood lead levels greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ). The median concentration of lead in the blood of children ages 1–5 dropped from 14  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  in 1976–1980 to about 2  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  in 2001–2002, a decline of 89 percent.
- In 2003, 5 percent of children ages 4–17 were reported by a parent to have definite or severe difficulties with emotions, concentration, behavior, or being able to get along with other people. Sixty-five percent of the parents of these children reported contacting a mental health professional or general doctor and/or that the child received special education for these difficulties.

### *Special Section*

- In 2002, 7 percent of births to married mothers were low birthweight, compared with 10 percent of births to unmarried mothers. In that same year, the infant mortality rate for infants born to married mothers was 5 per 1,000 live births, compared with 10 per 1,000 live births for infants born to unmarried mothers.

- 
- Pooled data from 1996 and 2001 show that 97 percent of adolescents ages 15–17 who lived with their married, biological parents were enrolled in school, compared with 94 percent of adolescents who lived with a single parent, and 80 percent of adolescents who lived with neither parent.
  - According to pooled data from 1996 and 2001, 86 percent of adolescents ages 15–17 who lived with their married, biological parents, were reported to be in excellent or very good health, compared with 80 percent of adolescents who lived with a married stepparent, 76 percent of those who lived with a single parent, and 67 percent of those who lived with neither parent.

- Pooled data from 1996 and 2001 show that 2 percent of all females ages 15–17 who lived with their married biological parents became unmarried mothers by age 17–19, compared with 9 percent of those who lived with a single parent, and 27 percent of those who did not live with either parent.

*Endnotes begin on page 73.*

## Summary List of Selected Measures and Indicators of Child Well-Being

Indicator Name	Description of Measure or Indicator	Previous Year of Data Value (Year)	New Data Value (Year)	Change Between Years
<b>Population and Family Characteristics</b>				
Child population	Number (in millions) of children ages 0–17 in the United States	72.8 (2002)	73.0 (2003)	▲
Children as a proportion of the population	Children ages 0–17 as a percentage of the U.S. population	25 (2002)	25 (2003)	NS
Racial and ethnic composition	Percentage of children ages 0–17 by race and ethnic group			
	White-alone <sup>1</sup>	77 (2002)	77 (2003)	NS
	Black-alone <sup>1</sup>	16 (2002)	16 (2003)	NS
	Asian-alone <sup>1</sup>	4 (2002)	4 (2003)	NS
	All other races	4 (2002)	4 (2003)	NS
	Hispanic (of any race)	18 (2002)	19 (2003)	▲
	White-alone, non-Hispanic <sup>1</sup>	60 (2002)	60 (2003)	NS
Children of at least one foreign-born parent	Percentage of children ages 0–17 living with at least one foreign-born parent	19.6 (2002)	20.3 (2004)	▲
Difficulty speaking English	Percentage of children ages 5–17 who speak a language other than English at home	19 (2002)	19 (2003)	NS
	Percentage of children ages 5–17 who speak a language other than English at home and who have difficulty speaking English	5 (2002)	5 (2003)	NS
Family structure and children's living arrangements	Percentage of children ages 0–17 with two married parents	68 (2003)	68 (2004)	NS
Births to unmarried women	Percentage of all births that are to unmarried women	34 (2002)	35 (2003)	▲
Child care	Percentage of children, ages 0–6, not yet in kindergarten, who received some form of nonparental child care on a regular basis	60 (1995)	61 (2001)	NS
	Percentage of children ages 0–4, with employed mothers, whose primary child care arrangement is with a relative	48 (1999)	46 (2002)	NS
Children's environments	Percentage of children ages 0–17 living in counties in which one or more of the Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards was exceeded	64 (2002)	62 (2003)	NS
<b>Economic Security</b>				
Child poverty and family income	Percentage of all children ages 0–17 living in poverty	17 (2002)	18 (2003)	▲
Secure parental employment	Percentage of children ages 0–17 living with at least one parent employed year round, full time	78 (2002)	77 (2003)	NS
Housing problems	Percentage of households with children ages 0–17 that report housing problems	36 (2001)	37 (2003)	NS
Food security and diet quality	Percentage of children ages 0–17 in households classified by USDA as “food insecure with child hunger”	0.8 (2002)	0.6 (2003)	▼
	Percentage of children ages 2–6 with a good diet	20 (1994–1996)	20 (1999–2000)	NS

Legend: NS = No statistically significant change ▲ = Statistically significant increase ▼ = Statistically significant decrease



## Summary List of Selected Measures and Indicators of Child Well-Being

Indicator Name	Description of Measure or Indicator	Previous Year of Data Value (Year)	New Data Value (Year)	Change Between Years
<b>Economic Security (cont.)</b>				
Access to health care	Percentage of children ages 0–17 covered by health insurance	88 (2002)	89 (2003)	NS
	Percentage of children ages 0–17 with no usual source of health care	6 (2002)	5 (2003)	NS
<b>Health</b>				
General health status	Percentage of children ages 0–17 in very good or excellent health	83 (2002)	83 (2003)	NS
Activity limitation	Percentage of children ages 5–17 with activity limitation resulting from one or more chronic health conditions	9 (2002)	8 (2003)	NS
Overweight	Percentage of children ages 6–18 who are overweight	11 (1988–1994)	16 (1999–2002)	▲
Childhood immunization	Percentage of children ages 19–35 months with the 4:3:1:3 combined series of vaccinations	78 (2002)	81 (2003)	▲
Low birthweight	Percentage of infants weighing less than 5 lb. 8 oz. at birth	7.8 (2002)	7.9 (2003)	▲
Infant mortality	Deaths before the first birthday per 1,000 live births	6.8 (2001)	7.0 (2002)	▲
Child mortality	Deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–4	33 (2001)	31 (2002)	▼
	Deaths per 100,000 children ages 5–14	17 (2001)	17 (2002)	NS
Adolescent mortality	Deaths per 100,000 adolescents ages 15–19	67 (2001)	68 (2002)	NS
Adolescent births	Births per 1,000 females ages 15–17	23 (2002)	22 (2003)	▼
<b>Behavior and Social Environment</b>				
Regular cigarette smoking	Percentage of students who reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days			
	8th-graders	5 (2003)	4 (2004)	NS
	10th-graders	9 (2003)	8 (2004)	NS
	12th-graders	16 (2003)	16 (2004)	NS
Alcohol use	Percentage of students who reported having five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the past 2 weeks			
	8th-graders	12 (2003)	11 (2004)	NS
	10th-graders	22 (2003)	22 (2004)	NS
	12th-graders	28 (2003)	29 (2004)	NS
Illicit drug use	Percentage of students who have used illicit drugs in the previous 30 days			
	8th-graders	10 (2003)	8 (2004)	▼
	10th-graders	20 (2003)	18 (2004)	NS
	12th-graders	24 (2003)	23 (2004)	NS
Youth victims and perpetrators of serious violent crimes	Youth victims of serious violent crimes per 1,000 youth ages 12–17	10 (2002)	18 (2003)	▲
	Youth offenders of serious violent crimes per 1,000 youth ages 12–17	11 (2002)	15 (2003)	▲

Legend: NS = No statistically significant change ▲ = Statistically significant increase ▼ = Statistically significant decrease

## Summary List of Selected Measures and Indicators of Child Well-Being

Indicator Name	Description of Measure or Indicator	Previous Year of Data Value (Year)	New Data Value (Year)	Change Between Years
<b>Education</b>				
Family reading to young children	Percentage of children ages 3–5 who were read to every day in the last week by a family member	54 (1999)	58 (2001)	▲
Early childhood care and education	Percentage of children ages 3–5 who are enrolled in center-based early childhood care and education programs	60 (1999)	56 (2001)	▼
Mathematics and reading achievement	Average mathematics scale score of 4th-graders	226 (2000)	235 (2003)	▲
	8th-graders	273 (2000)	278 (2003)	▲
	12th-graders	302 (1996)	300 (2000)	NS
	Average reading scale score of 4th-graders	219 (2002)	218 (2003)	NS
	8th-graders	264 (2002)	263 (2003)	▼
	12th-graders	290 (1998)	287 (2002)	▼
High school academic coursetaking	Percentage of high school graduates who completed high-level coursework in Mathematics	41 (1998)	45 (2000)	NS
	Science	62 (1998)	63 (2000)	NS
	English	29 (1998)	34 (2000)	▲
	Foreign language	30 (1998)	30 (2000)	NS
High school completion	Percentage of young adults ages 18–24 who have completed high school	87 (2002)	87 (2003)	NS
Youth neither enrolled in school nor working	Percentage of youth ages 16–19 who are neither enrolled in school nor working	8 (2003)	8 (2004)	NS
Higher education	Percentage of adults ages 25–29 who have completed a bachelor's or more advanced degree	28 (2003)	28 (2004)	NS

*Endnotes begin on page 73.*

Legend: NS = No statistically significant change    ▲ = Statistically significant increase    ▼ = Statistically significant decrease