

A Summary of Significant Changes Across the U.S. on Key Indicators of Well Being for Children and Youth

According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, there are a limited number of key indicators that show a significant increase or decrease over the past year of measurement. Please note this summary only highlights indicators showing significant change.

Population and Family Characteristics

From 2003 to 2004, there were a number of changes relating to population and family. The number of children age 17 and under increased significantly. Births to unmarried women (ages 15-44) rose significantly as did the overall percentage of births to unmarried women. From 2001 to 2004 there was a significant decline in the number of children, ages 0 - 6, receiving nonparental care on a regular basis. During the same period there was a significant increase in the number of children of employed mothers whose primary nonparental caretaker was a non-relative.

Academic Achievement

From 2003 to 2005, there was a significant increase in 4th and 8th graders' scores for math achievement. There was no such improvement for 12th graders. During the same time period, reading scores showed significant improvement for 4th graders only. Both 8th and 12th graders scores declined significantly.

Social Behavior and Citizenship

Between 2004 and 2005, there was a significant decrease in the number of 12th graders who reported regularly smoking cigarettes in the previous 30 days. However, there was no such decline for 4th and 8th graders. From 2003 to 2004, youth (ages 12-17) victims of a serious violent crime declined significantly. However, there was no such decline for serious violent youth offenders.

Health

From 2003 to 2004 there was a significant increase in the number of low birth weight deliveries. During this same time period, a significant decrease in adolescent (ages 15-17) births was also noted. Between 2002 and 2003, there was a significant decrease in the infant mortality rate in the United States.

Source, Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics: America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well Being, 2006.