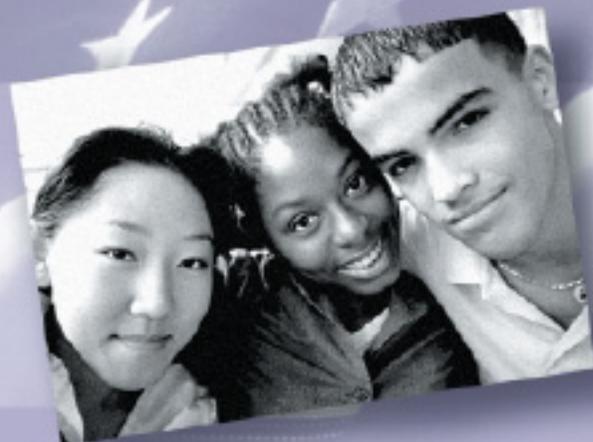


America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2000



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. Members of the Forum as of Spring 2000 are listed below.

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Katherine K. Wallman
Chief Statistician

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Single copies are available through the National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse while supplies last: 2070 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 450, Vienna, VA 22182; (703) 356-1964; nmchc@circsol.com. The report is also available on the World Wide Web: <http://childstats.gov>.

Foreword



America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2000 is the fourth report in an annual series prepared by the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. A collaborative effort by 20 Federal agencies, including two—the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration—that joined the Forum this year, the report is required by President Clinton's Executive Order No. 13045. As in past years, readers will find here an accessible compendium of indicators—drawn from the most recent, most reliable official statistics—illustrative of both the promises and the difficulties confronting our Nation's young people.

This report updates the information presented last year, maintaining comparability with previous volumes while incorporating several improvements. For example, two data gaps that were identified in earlier reports have been addressed by establishing a background indicator to measure child care utilization and providing further details on children's living arrangements. In addition, this year's report includes a new background measure on exposure to air pollution as well as more detailed information on the causes of children's deaths. Special feature indicators this year include measures of children's knowledge and skills at kindergarten entry and youth involvement in volunteer activities.

By recognizing the gaps in our information, *America's Children* challenges Federal statistical agencies to do better. Forum agencies are meeting that challenge. They are undertaking efforts to provide more comprehensive and consistent information on the condition and progress of the Nation's children. Forum agencies will continue working to close critical data gaps, particularly in areas such as disability, the role of fathers in children's lives, and the measurement of positive behaviors associated with improved child development.

In November 1999, the value of the *America's Children* reports and the extraordinary cooperation they represent were lauded by Vice President Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government. The efforts of the Forum were recognized for their contributions to the development of Federal, State, and local policies and programs to improve the lives of children and youth. The "Hammer Award," presented to teams of Federal employees and their partners who have made significant contributions that support reinventing government principles, captures the essence of 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>. And none of this work would be possible without the continued cooperation of thousands of American citizens who willingly provide the data that are summarized and analyzed by staff in the Federal agencies.

We invite you to suggest other ways to enhance this annual portrait of the Nation's most valuable resource: its children. I applaud the Forum's collaborative efforts in producing this fourth annual 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

This report reflects the commitment and involvement of the members of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. It was prepared by the Writing Subcommittee of the Reporting Committee of the Forum. This year, the committee was chaired by Katherine Heck, National Center for Health Statistics. Other committee members included Dawn Aldridge, Food and Nutrition Service; Art Hughes, National Institute on Drug Abuse; Alisa Jenny, National Center for Health Statistics; David Johnson, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Laura Lippman, National Center for Education Statistics; and Kristin Smith, Census Bureau.

The Reporting Committee of the Forum, chaired by Katherine Heck, guided the development of the new indicators. Members of the Reporting Committee not represented on the Writing Subcommittee included Linda Gordon, Immigration and Naturalization Service; Laura Montgomery, Ken Schoendorf, Gloria Simpson, and Barbara Foley Wilson, National Center for Health Statistics; Jeff Evans, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Matt Stagner, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services; Woodie Kessel, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; Cathy Gotschall, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Russ Scarato and Stella Yu, Maternal and Child Health Bureau; Susan Schechter, Office of Management and Budget; Tracey Woodruff, Environmental Protection Agency; and Kathy Nelson, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Other staff members of the Forum agencies provided data, developed indicators, or wrote parts of the report. They include Lynne Casper, Joseph Dalaker, Debbie Dove, Jason Fields, Mary Jane Slagle, Greg Spencer, Census Bureau; Michael Rand, Bureau of Justice Statistics; Robert McIntire and Howard Hayghe, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Monina Klevens and Victor Coronado, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Mark Lino and Peter Basiotis, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion; Gary Bickel, Food and Nutrition Service; Kathryn Chandler, Chris Chapman, and Jerry West, National Center for Education Statistics; Robin Cohen, Cathy Duran, Lois Fingerhut, Donna Hoyert, and Stephanie Ventura, National Center for Health Statistics; and Barbara Allen-Hagen, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Other individuals who assisted with the report included Steve Agbayani and Yupin Bae, Pinkerton Computer Consultants, Inc., and DeeAnn Brimhall, Kristin Denton, and Linda Shafer, Education Statistics Services Institute.

Westat, in support of the National Center for Health Statistics, assisted the committee in producing the report. Janice Kociol coordinated and managed the production of the report and was the initial copy editor. She also assisted the committee. Christine Winquist Nord provided substantive and technical guidance. Other Westat staff members who assisted in preparing the report included Andrea Forsythe, Peggy Hunker, Nancy Vaden-Kiernan, and Amy Van Driessche.

The following additional staff members made valuable contributions in their reviews of the report: Denise Dougherty, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; Larry Beasley and Martin O'Connell, Census Bureau; Deborah Klein, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Steven Carlson, Food and Nutrition Service; Michael Kogan, Maternal and Child Health Bureau; Val Plisko, Ellen Bradburn, and Tom Snyder, National Center for Education Statistics; Bill Huleatt, Office of Family Policy, Department of Defense; and Richard Bavier, Office of Management and Budget.

Carole Benson of Westat edited the final version of the report. Design contributions came from Westat Graphics Arts Dept., who designed the cover, produced and updated the report's tables and figures, and updated and laid out the text. The logo was developed by John Jeter of the National Center for Health Statistics. Patty Wilson, National Center for Health Statistics, coordinated the printing of the report. Finally, the National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse distributed the report for the Forum.

Highlights



America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2000 is the fourth annual report to the Nation on the condition of our most precious resource, our children. Included are eight contextual measures that describe the changing population, family characteristics, and context in which children are living and 23 indicators of well-being in the areas of economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. This year, two special features are presented, on kindergartners' knowledge and skills and youth participation in volunteer activities.

Part I: Population and Family Characteristics

- In 1999, there were 70.2 million children under age 18 in the United States, or 26 percent of the population, down from a peak of 36 percent at the end of the baby boom (1964). Children are expected to remain a stable percentage of the total population as they are projected to comprise 24 percent of the population in 2020.
- The racial and ethnic diversity of America's children continues to increase. In 1999, 65 percent of U.S. children were white, non-Hispanic; 15 percent were black, non-Hispanic; 4 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander; and 1 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native. The number of Hispanic children has increased faster than that of any other racial or ethnic group, growing from 9 percent of the child population in 1980 to 16 percent in 1999.
- The family structures of children have become more varied. The percentage of children living with one parent increased from 20 percent in 1980 to 27 percent in 1999. Most children living with single parents live with a single mother. However, the proportion of children living with single fathers doubled over this time period, from 2 percent in 1980 to 4 percent in 1999. Some children live with a single parent who has a cohabiting partner: 16 percent of children living with single fathers and 9 percent of children living with single mothers also lived with their parents' partners.
- In 1999, 54 percent of children from birth through third grade received some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents, up from 51 percent in 1995.

Part II: Indicators of Children's Well-Being

Economic Security Indicators

- The poverty rate for related children dropped from 19 percent in 1997 to 18 percent in 1998. The poverty rate for children has fluctuated since the early 1980s: it reached a high of 22 percent in 1993 and has since decreased to 18 percent, a rate comparable to that seen in 1980.
- The percentage of children living with their parents where at least one parent was working full time all year increased slightly in 1998 to 77 percent, from 76 percent in 1997.
- Many children live in households that have housing problems, such as physically inadequate housing, crowded housing, or a high cost burden. The percentage of households with children that have these problems has been increasing since 1978; 36 percent had one or more housing problems in 1997, up from 30 percent in 1978.
- The percentage of children experiencing food insecurity decreased in 1999. However, nearly one-third of children in poverty experienced food insecurity.
- While the percentage of children without health insurance remained steady at 15 percent, the percentage with private insurance increased to 68 percent in 1998.

Health Indicators

- The percentage of children born with low birthweight (less than about 5.5 pounds) or very low birthweight (less than about 3.3 pounds) has steadily increased since 1984. About 7.6 percent of infants were low birthweight, and 1.4 percent were very low birthweight, in 1998. The increase in the proportion of low-birthweight infants is partly due to the rising number of twins and other multiple births.
- Death rates for children continued to drop in 1998. For children ages 1 to 4 and 5 to 14, the death rates were 34 and 20 per 100,000 children in each age group, respectively. The leading cause of death in these age groups was unintentional injuries, with most of these fatal injuries resulting from car crashes. Birth defects, cancer, and homicide were also leading causes of death for children ages 1 to 14.

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- Deaths among adolescents ages 15 to 19 also continued to decline. In 1997, the adolescent mortality rate was 75 per 100,000 youth ages 15 to 19. Declines in deaths from firearm injuries between 1994 and 1997 contributed to the overall drop in mortality for adolescents.
 - The birth rate for adolescents dropped by more than one-fifth between 1991 and 1998. In 1998, the birth rate for 15- to 17-year-olds was 30 per 1,000 females ages 15 to 17, the lowest it has been in at least 40 years.

Behavior and Social Environment Indicators

- The prevalence of heavy drinking among adolescents has been stable over the past few years. In 1999, 31 percent of 12th-graders, 26 percent of 10th-graders, and 15 percent of 8th-graders reported having five or more drinks in a row at least once during the past 2 weeks.
- Violent crimes committed by young people have dropped sharply. In 1998, the serious violent crime offending rate for youth was 27 crimes per 1,000 adolescents ages 12 to 17, totaling 616,000 such crimes involving juveniles—a drop by more than half from the 1993 high, and the lowest level since data were first collected in 1973.

Education Indicators

- In 1999, 53 percent of children ages 3 to 5 were read to daily by a family member, the same as in 1993 after increasing to 57 percent in 1996.
- Between 1996 and 1999, the percentage of children ages 3 to 5 not yet in kindergarten who were enrolled in early childhood centers rose from 55 to 59 percent. The largest increases were among children living in poverty, children with mothers who were not in the labor force, and black, non-Hispanic children.
- The overall high school completion rate for young adults ages 18 to 24 declined from 86 percent in 1997 to 85 percent in 1998. This decline was most pronounced among Hispanics.

Special Features

- Upon entering kindergarten in 1998, 66 percent of children were able to recognize letters and 29 percent knew the sounds made by letters that begin words—important skills in developing the ability to read.
- Fifty-five percent of high school students participated in volunteer activities in 1999, up from 50 percent in 1996. In 1999, 16 percent of these teens performed 35 or more hours of service throughout the school year.

Summary List of Indicators

Indicator Name	Description of Indicator	Previous Year of Data Value (Year)	New Data Value (Year)	Change Between Years
Economic Security				
Child poverty and family income	Percentage of related children under age 18 in poverty	19 (1997)	18 (1998)	▼
Secure parental employment	Percentage of children under age 18 living with parents with at least one parent employed full time all year	76 (1997)	77 (1998)	▲
Housing problems	Percentage of households with children under age 18 that report any of three housing problems	36 (1995)	36 (1997)	NS
Food security	Percentage of children under age 18 in households experiencing food insecurity with moderate or severe hunger	4.7 (1998)	3.8 (1999)	▼
Access to health care	Percentage of children ages 2 to 5 with a good diet	24 (1996)	—	
	Percentage of children under age 18 covered by health insurance	85 (1997)	85 (1998)	NS
Access to health care	Percentage of children under age 18 with no usual source of health care	6 (1996)	7 (1997)	NS
	Health			
General health status	Percentage of children under age 18 in very good or excellent health	80 (1996)	81 (1997)	NS
Activity limitation	Percentage of children ages 5 to 17 with any limitation in activity resulting from chronic conditions	8 (1996)	8 (1997)	NS
Childhood immunization	Percentage of children ages 19 to 35 months who received combined series immunization coverage	76 (1997)	79 (1998)	▲
Low birthweight	Percentage of infants weighing less than 5.5 pounds at birth	7.5 (1997)	7.6 (1998)	▲
Infant mortality	Deaths before the first birthday per 1,000 live births	7.2 (1997)	7.2 (1998)	NS
Child mortality	Deaths per 100,000 children ages 1 to 4	36 (1997)	34 (1998)	▼
	Deaths per 100,000 children ages 5 to 14	21 (1997)	20 (1998)	▼
Adolescent mortality	Deaths per 100,000 adolescents ages 15 to 19	79 (1996)	75 (1997)	▼
Adolescent births	Births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 17	32 (1997)	30 (1998)	▼
Behavior and Social Environment				
Regular cigarette smoking	Percentage of 8th-grade students who reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days	9 (1998)	8 (1999)	NS
	Percentage of 10th-grade students who reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days	16 (1998)	16 (1999)	NS
	Percentage of 12th-grade students who reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days	22 (1998)	23 (1999)	NS
Alcohol use	Percentage of 8th-grade students who reported having five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the last 2 weeks	14 (1998)	15 (1999)	▲

Legend: NS = No significant change ▲ = Significant increase ▼ = Significant decrease — = not applicable

Indicator Name	Description of Indicator	Previous Year of Data Value (Year)	New Data Value (Year)	Change Between Years
Alcohol use (cont.)	Percentage of 10th-grade students who reported having five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the last 2 weeks	24 (1998)	26 (1999)	NS
	Percentage of 12th-grade students who reported having five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the last 2 weeks	32 (1998)	31 (1999)	NS
Illicit drug use	Percentage of 8th-grade students who have used illicit drugs in the previous 30 days	12 (1998)	12 (1999)	NS
	Percentage of 10th-grade students who have used illicit drugs in the previous 30 days	22 (1998)	22 (1999)	NS
	Percentage of 12th-grade students who have used illicit drugs in the previous 30 days	26 (1998)	26 (1999)	NS
Youth victims and perpetrators of serious violent crimes	Rate of serious violent crime victimizations per 1,000 youth ages 12 to 17	27 (1997)	25 (1998)	NS
	Serious violent crime offending rate per 1,000 youth ages 12 to 17	31 (1997)	27 (1998)	NS
Education				
Family reading to young children	Percentage of children ages 3 to 5 who are read to every day by a family member	57 (1996)	53 (1999)	▼
Early childhood care and education	Percentage of children ages 3 to 5 who are enrolled in early childhood centers	55 (1996)	59 (1999)	▲
Mathematics and reading achievement (0-500 scale)	Average mathematics scale score of 9-year-olds	231 (1996)	—	
	Average mathematics scale score of 13-year-olds	274 (1996)	—	
	Average mathematics scale score of 17-year-olds	307 (1996)	—	
	Average reading scale score of 9-year-olds	212 (1996)	—	
	Average reading scale score of 13-year-olds	259 (1996)	—	
	Average reading scale score of 17-year-olds	287 (1996)	—	
High school completion	Percentage of young adults ages 18 to 24 who have completed high school	86 (1997)	85 (1998)	▼
Youth neither enrolled in school nor working	Percentage of youth ages 16 to 19 who are neither in school nor working	8 (1998)	8 (1999)	NS
Higher education	Percentage of high school graduates ages 25 to 29 who have completed a bachelor's degree or higher	31 (1998)	32 (1999)	NS
Special Features				
Beginning kindergartners' knowledge and skills	Percentage of beginning kindergartners who are proficient in recognizing letters	—	66 (1998)	
	Percentage of beginning kindergartners who often or very often form friendships	—	77 (1998)	
	Percentage of beginning kindergartners who often or very often persist at a task	—	71 (1998)	
Youth participation in volunteer activities	Percentage of high school students who participated in volunteer activities during the current school year	50 (1996)	55 (1999)	▲

Legend: NS = No significant change ▲ = Significant increase ▼ = Significant decrease — = not applicable

About This Report



America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2000, developed by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, represents the fourth annual synthesis of information on the status of the Nation's most valuable resource, our children. This report presents 23 key indicators of the well-being of children. These indicators are monitored through official Federal statistics covering children's economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. The report also presents data on eight key demographic measures and includes two indicators as special features: children's knowledge and skills at kindergarten entry and youth participation in volunteer activities. The 20 agencies of the Forum have also introduced improvements in the measurement of several of the indicators presented last year.

What is the purpose of this report?

This report provides the Nation with a broad annual summary of national indicators of child well-being and monitors changes in these indicators over time. The Forum hopes that this report also will stimulate discussions by policy-makers and the public, exchanges between the data and policy communities, and improvements in Federal data on children and families.

What is the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics?

The Forum is a formal structure for collaboration among 20 Federal agencies that produce or use statistical data on children and families. The members of the Forum are listed on the back of the cover page. Building on earlier cooperative activities, the Forum was founded in 1994. It was formally established by Executive Order No. 13045 in 1997 to foster the coordination and integration of the collection and reporting of data on children and families. The two major publications produced by the Forum are *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being* (produced annually since 1997) and *Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data and Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation and Fatherhood* (June 1998). In addition, the Forum undertakes the following activities:

- Developing priorities for improving consistency and enhancing the collection of data on children, youth, and families;
- Improving the reporting and dissemination of information on the status of children and families to the policy community and the general public; and

- Encouraging the production and dissemination of better data on children and families at the State and local levels.

How is the report structured?

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2000 is intended to present information and data on the well-being of children in a non-technical, user-friendly format. It is designed to complement other more technical or comprehensive reports produced by 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 that have taken place during the past few decades in eight key demographic measures. These background measures provide an important context for understanding the key indicators and the child population. They also provide basic information about children in the United States, as well as the socio-demographic changes that are occurring in the child population. These data series answer questions such as: How many children are there in the United States? What proportion of the population are children? How racially and ethnically diverse are our children? How many have difficulty speaking English? What types of families do they live in? What is the quality of the environment they live in?

The second part, *Indicators of Children's Well-Being*, contains data on key indicators, or measures, of how well we are doing in providing economic security, educational opportunity, and a healthy and safe environment in which children can play, learn, and grow. Unlike the data presented in Part I of the report, which simply describe the changing context in which children live, the data in Part II offer insight into how well children are faring by providing information in four key areas of child well-being: economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education.

The economic security indicators document poverty and income among children and the accessibility of basic necessities such as food, housing, and health care. The health indicators document the physical health and well-being of children by presenting information on their general health status, immunization coverage, and their likelihood, at various ages, to die. The behavioral and social environment indicators present information about young people's participation in illegal, dangerous, or high-risk behaviors, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, using illicit drugs, or engaging in serious violent crimes. Finally, the education indicators examine how

well we are succeeding in educating our children. They include measures that capture preschoolers' exposure to reading and early education, measures of student achievement, and indicators of how many young adults complete high school and college.

For each background measure in *Part I: Population and Family Characteristics*, and each indicator in *Part II: Indicators of Children's Well-Being*, three types of information are presented:

- A *short statement* about why the measure or indicator is important to the understanding of the condition of children;
- *Figures* showing important facts about trends or population groups; and
- *Highlights* with information on the current status, recent trends, and important differences by population groups noted.

In addition, *Appendix A: Detailed Tables* contains tabulated data for each measure and additional detail not discussed in the main body of the report. *Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions* contains descriptions of the sources and surveys used to generate the indicators.

Why are two indicators called special features?

At the end of Part II, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2000* presents data on two "special features." The special features are a regular component of *America's Children*, presenting data that are not available with sufficient frequency to be considered as a regular key indicator, but nevertheless provide important information on child well-being. This year's special features focus on beginning kindergartners' knowledge and skills, and youth participation in volunteer activities.

How has the report changed since last year?

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2000 is similar to last year's report in both format and content. While most of the indicators presented last year are included and updated, the Forum has worked to improve the report in a number of important ways. Some changes reflect improvements in the availability of data for certain key indicators. Some changes clarify the concept being measured or expand the indicator substantively. There are two new background measures (Child Care and Children's Environments) and two new special features in the report (Beginning Kindergartners' Knowledge and Skills, and Youth Participation in Volunteer Activities). Adequate trend

information for early childhood education has allowed for the consolidation of two measures on this topic. All the changes reflect the many helpful comments and suggestions for improvements that were received from readers and users of the previous reports.

How were the key indicators selected?

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2000 presents a selected set of key indicators 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 based on 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.

What groups of children are included in this report?

In order to convey a comprehensive understanding of child well-being, the report looks at the status of all children under age 18 living in the United States. A few indicators provide data on older youth and young adults (persons ages 18 to 24 years). In most cases throughout the report, the word "children" refers to any person under age 18 living in a civilian or noninstitutionalized setting in the United States. When data are being presented only for specific age groups, this is indicated in the text (e.g., children ages 1 to 4). As is also noted in the text, some indicators examine only particular groups of children (e.g., children living in family settings, children living with parents, children in certain age groups or grade levels). For most of the indicators, the relevant information has been reported by an adult in the household or family and not directly by the children.

In many cases, we have also presented the data on children by race and Hispanic origin. In most cases, Hispanics have been separated from the white and black categories and "non-Hispanic" will follow the race designation, as in "white, non-Hispanic." In some cases, data for Hispanics were not available. In these

cases, data for race groups (white, black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander) include Hispanics.

What are the sources for the data in this report?

Data for the key indicators are drawn primarily from national surveys and from vital records. Federal agencies regularly survey the population on many issues. Some national surveys use interviewers to gather information on children through a variety of methods, including speaking directly, by telephone or in person, with families selected through rigorous sampling methods. Other national surveys are questionnaires distributed directly to youth to measure certain practices and behaviors. In addition, some national data collection efforts directly assess students by giving them tests or by asking them to perform certain tasks, such as identifying sounds and letters. Federal agencies also collect information on births and deaths from State health departments. These nationally representative surveys, along with data collected through vital statistics, provide the best available measures of the condition of U.S. children. Although there are important areas of children's lives where administrative data from local social service agencies often are available, such measures were not included in this report. The availability and quality of such data can be affected by policy differences among agencies in various local areas and by resource constraints. Further information on data sources for this report is provided in *Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions*.

In the textual presentation of data for this report, percentages and rates were, as a rule, rounded to the nearest whole number (unless the data are from vital statistics or rounding would mask significant differences). The text discusses changes over time or between-group differences only when the differences are statistically significant.

What other data are needed?

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2000 points to critical gaps in the coverage and timeliness of the Nation's information 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 policy-makers 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 data and measures of child well-being in need of development. These lists include many important aspects of children's lives for which regular indicators are lacking or are in development, such as homelessness, long-term poverty, mental health, disability, neighborhood environment, and early childhood development. 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.

Where can I get more information about the indicators?

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 additional 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. These reports include *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth*, published annually by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; *Youth Indicators*, published biennially by the National Center for Education Statistics; and *Health, United States*, published annually by the National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Often these compendia contain additional details not reported in *America's Children*. *Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions* also contains a list of agency contacts who can provide further information on the relevant surveys and indicators.

Can I find this report on the Internet?

The report can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://childstats.gov>. The website version of the report contains data for earlier years that are presented in the figures but not in the tables in this report. The Forum's website also contains information on the overall structure and organization of the Forum, as well as other reports, and news on current activities. Also found on the website are links to related reports

of Forum agencies and other organizations providing more detailed data. The website addresses of the Forum agencies are as follows:

Agency Websites

Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov>

Department of Commerce

Census Bureau:

<http://www.census.gov>

Department of Defense

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel Support, Families and Education):

<http://mfrc.calib.com>

Department of Education

National Center for Education Statistics:

<http://www.nces.ed.gov>

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families:

<http://www.acf.dhhs.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.os.dhhs.gov>

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.ojjdp.ncjrs.org>

Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics:

<http://www.bls.gov>

Women's Bureau:

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb>

Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration:

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Children's

Health Protection:

<http://www.epa.gov/children>

National Science Foundation

Division of Science Resources Studies:

<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs>

Office of Management and Budget

Statistical Policy Office:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>