



Border KIDS COUNT

Child Well-Being in New Mexico's Border Counties
May 2009



The national KIDS COUNT data book, issued annually by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, features ten core indicators of child well-being: low birth weight babies, infant mortality, child and teen death rates, teen birth rate, secure parental employment¹, children in poverty, idle youth², percentage of single-parent families, and high school dropout rate. These indicators reflect important areas of child well-being—including health, education, and economic security—across the developmental stage, from birth to young adulthood. Table 1 breaks out similar indicators by county.

Table 1—Indicators of Child Well-Being	Doña Ana County	Grant County	Hidalgo County	Luna County	Otero County	Sierra County	New Mexico
Low Birth-Weight Babies (2006)	8.1%	11.4%	8.8%	11.4%	7.9%	8.2%	8.9%
Infant Mortality (of state total) (2006)	12.4%	1.8%	0.6%	1.8%	2.4%	0.0%	N/A
Child Death Rate (0-14 years old) (2006)	72	70.4	N/A	64.7	50.9	N/A	61.8
Teen Death Rate (15-19 years old) (2006)	35.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	80.2
Teen Birth Rate (15-19 years old) (2006)	74.4	64.0	62.2	92.8	43.3	57.8	61.7
County unemployment	5.9%	8.0%	6.6%	16.6%	5.1%	4.9%	5.7%
Children in Poverty (2007)	34.6%	28.6%	34.8%	53.5%	31.2%	40.4%	25.2%
Single Parent Families (2005-2007)							
Male Householder	2,633	534	N/A	458	1,032	N/A	39,393
With own children under age 18	43.9%	42.3%	N/A	70.7%	76.0%	N/A	56.0%
Under age 6 only	16.2%	60.2%	N/A	15.1%	15.8%	N/A	25.8%
Under age 6 and ages 6-17	34.1%	0.0%	N/A	0.0%	12.2%	N/A	16.3%
Ages 6-17 only	49.6%	39.8%	N/A	84.9%	71.9%	N/A	57.8%
Female Householder	10,402	1,504	N/A	1,409	2,908	N/A	96,184
With own children under age 18	64.9%	65.0%	N/A	64.7%	59.3%	N/A	63.1%
Under age 6 only	21.8%	20.0%	N/A	18.4%	14.6%	N/A	21.3%
Under age 6 and ages 6-17	21.5%	10.0%	N/A	17.5%	19.5%	N/A	18.2%
Ages 6-17 only	56.7%	69.9%	N/A	64.0%	65.9%	N/A	60.5%



Various methodologies are used to calculate high school dropout and graduation figures. Table 2 shows high school dropout figures from the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED). PED calculates its dropout figures by dividing the number of dropouts by the cumulative total enrollment for the school year (multiplied by 100).³

Table 2—High School Dropouts (2007-2008)	
Doña Ana County	
Gadsden Independent School District	2.1%
Hatch Valley Municipal School District	2.5%
Las Cruces Public School District	2.7%
Grant County	
Cobre Consolidated School District	1.5%
Silver City Consolidated School District	3.5%
Hidalgo County	
Animas Public School District	0.0%
Lordsburg Municipal School District	2.6%
Luna County	
Deming Public School District	0.4%
Otero County	
Alamogordo Public School District	0.3%
Cloudcroft Municipal School District	0.0%
Tularosa Municipal School District	0.8%
Sierra County	
Truth or Consequences Municipal School District	2.9%
New Mexico	3.6%

Table 3 shows results for high school graduation rates by race and Hispanic origin. The Education Trust calculations are based on the number of graduates in a state in 2006, divided by the freshman population in 2002.⁴ The Diplomas Count report uses the cumulative promotion index (CPI) methodology, which looks at how many students advance from ninth to tenth grade, tenth to eleventh grade, eleventh to twelfth grade, and twelfth grade to graduation.⁵

Table 3—High School Graduation	NM PED (2006-2007)	Education Trust (2009) Class of 2006	Diplomas Count (2008) Class of 2005
African-American	85.97%	70%	52.1%
Asian	91.81%	91%	72.6%
Hispanic	85.22%	62%	49.4%
Native American	78.93%	61%	45.3%
White	91.31%	76%	64.2%

The Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) data contain many indicators on various risky behaviors among high school students that may continue into adulthood. Resiliency factors are also included in the survey, such as the level of caring relationships a youth has, and boundaries set by family and school.⁶ Table 4 on page 3 lists a portion of some of the risky behaviors in which youth in New Mexico’s border counties reported engaging.

Table 4—Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (2007)	Doña Ana County	Grant County	Hidalgo County	Luna County	Otero County	Sierra County	New Mexico
Behaviors associated with violence							
Have gun in home	34.5%	72.4%	72.0%	64.6%	61.1%	67.6%	57.7%
Carried a weapon* in the past 30 days	19.0%	32.3%	29.3%	30.5%	29.9%	28.2%	27.5%
Carried a gun in the past 30 days	6.7%	13.2%	12.9%	17.4%	9.5%	18.1%	11.7%
Physical fight in the past 12 mos.	42.1%	29.9%	37.2%	38.4%	34.9%	43.9%	37.1%
Violence on school property							
Physical fight in the past 12 mos.	17.0%	12.1%	14.8%	18.0%	14.5%	16.7%	16.9%
Carried a weapon in the past 30 days	4.3%	7.2%	4.4%	7.5%	10.8%	8.5%	9.3%
Skipped school because student felt unsafe on the way to, from, or at school in the past 30 days	16.0%	8.5%	8.7%	15.0%	9.3%	13.6%	9.0%
Threatened or injured with a weapon in the past 12 mos.	8.9%	5.2%	6.4%	8.9%	12.8%	12.4%	10.1%
Dating and sexual violence							
Hit by boy/girl friend in the past 12 mos.	12.8%	9.7%	7.3%	11.8%	13.7%	12.0%	12.6%
Physically forced to have sexual intercourse	11.1%	5.4%	12.5%	10.6%	11.1%	12.0%	9.2%
Mental health, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts							
Sadness/hopelessness every day for two or more weeks in a row	39.0%	23.1%	36.4%	35.5%	29.3%	39.2%	30.8%
Seriously considered suicide in the past 12 mos.	22.5%	14.8%	24.4%	21.3%	17.1%	25.7%	19.3%
Made a suicide plan in the past 12 mos.	20.5%	11.2%	22.5%	13.3%	12.9%	24.6%	15.1%
Attempted suicide in the past 12 mos.	18.4%	6.2%	18.7%	17.7%	11.0%	16.1%	14.3%
Suicide attempt resulting in an injury, poisoning, or overdose	6.0%	1.6%	6.3%	5.6%	5.7%	5.0%	4.8%
Tobacco use: cigarettes							
Ever tried cigarettes	61.2%	49.1%	57.8%	62.9%	59.4%	67.1%	59.9%
First cigarette before age 13	16.2%	14.4%	14.4%	15.6%	23.0%	22.6%	18.0%
Current smoker**	23.4%	17.0%	18.8%	19.9%	22.3%	27.0%	24.2%
Frequent smoker***	5.4%	4.2%	5.3%	4.1%	8.9%	13.5%	6.7%
Smoked cigarettes on school property in the past 30 days	7.2%	5.2%	1.7%	6.8%	8.0%	15.7%	7.5%
Alcohol use							
Had first drink before age 13	26.9%	24.0%	38.8%	33.0%	33.9%	31.9%	30.7%
Current drinker^	53.5%	39.9%	46.5%	49.7%	44.9%	43.0%	43.2%
Binge drinker^^	33.3%	23.5%	28.3%	29.4%	30.1%	26.8%	27.4%
Used alcohol on school property in the past 30 days	8.7%	5.7%	7.6%	7.9%	7.1%	4.3%	8.7%
Drug use: marijuana							
Current marijuana use^^^	21.6%	18.8%	11.4%	20.1%	29.7%	25.7%	25.0%
Used marijuana before age 13	12.3%	14.8%	11.6%	14.3%	21.1%	16.8%	18.2%
Used marijuana on school property in the past 30 days	5.9%	4.2%	5.1%	8.7%	8.0%	10.3%	7.9%
Past 30-day drug use							
Cocaine	9.5%	2.8%	3.3%	3.4%	5.0%	6.1%	5.4%
Heroin	2.8%	2.9%	2.3%	2.8%	4.6%	3.0%	3.9%
Meth	2.9%	1.5%	4.1%	3.3%	5.3%	6.1%	4.4%
Ecstasy	2.9%	3.1%	3.3%	3.3%	5.8%	4.3%	5.1%
Inhalants	8.9%	4.7%	6.3%	8.6%	9.1%	9.6%	7.8%
Pain killers to get high	4.4%	7.1%	6.7%	6.6%	12.9%	16.6%	11.7%
Sexual activity							
Ever had sexual intercourse	48.3%	42.0%	56.2%	59.6%	47.9%	51.4%	45.7%
Had sex before age 13	5.1%	5.1%	8.4%	8.5%	9.9%	6.8%	7.7%
Currently sexually active	36.0%	32.1%	36.4%	41.7%	28.0%	41.1%	31.5%
Had sex with four or more people in lifetime	16.4%	10.3%	19.6%	19.8%	13.8%	19.3%	13.8%

Endnotes and Sources

- ¹ County employment percentage is substituted for the percentage of children whose parents have secure employment.
- ² The New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey data on page 3 are substituted for idle youth.
- ³ 2007-2008 New Mexico Student Dropout Report, (Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico Public Education Department), 9.
- ⁴ Education Watch State Report, (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2009), 14.
- ⁵ New Mexico School to College: Can State P-16 Councils Ease the Transition? (Bethesda, MD: The Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2008), 4.
- ⁶ 2007 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) High School (Grades 9-12), (Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico Department of Health), 7.

Table 1

Low Birth-Weight Babies: New Mexico Department of Health, Selected Health Statistics Annual Report 2006
Infant Mortality: New Mexico Department of Health, Selected Health Statistics Annual Report 2006
Child Death Rate: New Mexico Department of Health, Indicator-Based Information System
Teen Death Rate: New Mexico Department of Health, Indicator-Based Information System
County Unemployment: New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions
Child Poverty: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates
Single-Parent Families: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
High School Dropouts: New Mexico Public Education Department
Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (Grades 9-12): New Mexico Department of Health

The Education Trust works to promote high academic achievement for all students at all levels from pre-kindergarten through college. Its goal is to close opportunity and achievement gaps among minority and low-income youth.

Diplomas Count is an annual report issued by the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center. The EPE's mission is to raise awareness and understanding on important issues in education.

YRRS

(New Mexico Department of Health)

*Weapons are guns, knives, or clubs.

**A current smoker is one who smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days.

***A frequent smoker is one who smoked cigarettes on at least 20 or the past 30 days.

^A current drinker is one who drank in the past 30 days.

^^A binge drinker is one who drank five or more drinks in a row, or in the past couple hours, in the past 30 days.

^^^Current marijuana use means one who used marijuana in the past 30 days.



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New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.



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