

February 2011 Issue

Center on the Family • University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

WHAT'S NEW

1. March 2011: National Reading Month
2. Child Health USA 2010
3. Report on Child Maltreatment 2009

1. March 2011: National Reading Month

March is National Reading Month—an observance which reminds us both of the pleasure of reading and the need for continued efforts to increase literacy across the nation. The KIDS COUNT special report—*Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*—from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, offers a close look at the problem of children’s literacy in our country. According to studies, reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a crucial marker in a child’s educational development. To achieve this goal of school-readiness, and close the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children, the KIDS COUNT report recommends: developing early care and education; encouraging and enabling parents; supporting initiatives to transform educational opportunities regardless of income; and developing solutions to help children at risk of not becoming reading proficient.

Data in the report specific to children in Hawai‘i include:

- Six percent (6%) of children ages 1 to 5 were read to less than 3 days per week by family members in 2007, compared with 16% nationwide.
- In 2008, 35% of Hawai‘i’s children ages 3 to 5 were not enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten, compared with 39% in the U.S.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of Hawai‘i’s 4th grade public school students scored below proficient reading level in 2009, compared to the national average of 68%. Rates varied from a high of 82% in Louisiana to a low of 53% in Massachusetts.
- Poverty undermines the likelihood of reading at grade level: a higher percentage of Hawai‘i’s fourth graders eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch scored below proficient reading level than did their peers who were not eligible for the subsidized lunch (85% vs. 66%).

To access the KIDS COUNT *Why Reading Matters* report and view more early reading indicators, visit:

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/Reports/ReadingMatters.aspx>

2. Child Health USA 2010

This data book published in October 2010 is now available online, covering more than 50 health status and health care indicators affecting children's health nationwide. As part of its aim to help increase effective public health efforts, *Child Health USA* focuses its attention on identifying risk factors from pre-birth and early birth, as well as understanding how risk factors and adverse health outcomes are related. This data presents population characteristics that include indicators on children of foreign-born parents, adopted children, and children born to working mothers. The section on health status addressed indicators on birth weight, infant mortality, and maternal mortality. Vaccination coverage, adequacy of insurance, dental care, and emergency department utilization is covered in the health services financing and utilization section. State-specific data is focused primarily on health status of infants and health insurance status.

Data for Hawai'i includes:

- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for Hawai'i is Medicaid, with a total enrollment of 28,803 children.
- The percentage of children under age 18 with private health insurance is 64.2%, compared to 42.7% with public insurance. Hawai'i has the sixth lowest percentage of uninsured children (5.2%) nationwide.
- The percentage of babies born with low birth weight (less than 5 pounds 8 ounces) was 8.0%, compared to the State average of 8.2%. The percentage of preterm births (less than 37 weeks) was 12.4%, similar in comparison to the national average of 12.7%. The percentage of births to unmarried women is 36.9%, lower than the national average of 39.7%.
- Infant and neonatal mortality rates were 6.48 for infants within the first year of life and 4.23 for neonatal deaths within the first 28 days of life per 1,000 live births. The lowest was Washington and the highest was District of Columbia (4.82 and 13.09 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively).

The full report can be accessed at:

<http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/chusa10/index.html>

3. Report on Child Maltreatment 2009

In its twentieth year of reporting on child maltreatment, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ACYF (Administration on Children, Youth and Families) has compiled national and state data derived from child protective services agencies for its Child Maltreatment 2009 Report. During FY 2009 there were an estimated 3.3 million referrals, while the alleged maltreatment of children was estimated at approximately 6 million children. All states in the U.S. have laws requiring professionals and institutions to report suspected maltreatment (neglect, physical, sexual, and psychological) to a child protective services agency.

The following are key findings for the state of Hawai'i:

- There were 1,139 substantiated reports of child maltreatment.
- Out of a total population of 290,361 children, duplicate count victims (experiencing more than one type of maltreatment) totaled 2,072, a rate of 7.1; the national rate was 10.1.
- Unduplicated count victims totaled 2,007, a rate of 6.9, lower than the national rate of 9.3.
- Over three-fourths (78.6%) of the unduplicated population were first-time victims which is slightly higher than the national average of 73.4%.
- Child victims were split almost evenly by gender: 48.1% were male and 51.7% were female.

The complete report can be accessed at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm09/index.htm>

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