



2011 SACRAMENTO COUNTY  
Children's Report Card  
*Executive Summary*

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SACRAMENTO COUNTY  
**CHILDREN'S COALITION**

Appointed by the Sacramento County  
Board of Supervisors



# A Call to Action

## from the Sacramento County Children's Coalition

The 2011 Sacramento County Children's Report Card is the sixth edition of the Report Card. It presents data on 40 different indicators of childhood health and well being in the areas of demographics, education, family economics, health, safety, and social and emotional well being. The Sacramento County Children's Coalition has designed the Report Card to serve as a foundation for:

- Guiding policy development;
- Setting goals for improvement;
- Tracking changing conditions;
- Supporting allocation of resources; and
- Promoting community responsibility for positive change.

The 2011 Children's Report Card is an online resource, accessible at [www.childrensreportcard.org](http://www.childrensreportcard.org). This executive summary serves as a companion piece, relaying key findings from each of the six result areas. The full value of the Report Card – meaning the presentation and explanation of 40 indicators of childhood health and well being – can be accessed by visiting the website.

The Children's Report Card does not present recommendations. Instead, we encourage everyone – residents, students, parents, providers, businesses, and policy makers alike – to actively use the information presented in the Report Card in order to think strategically about how we are going to serve our children, and how we are going to ensure a vibrant community for tomorrow. For all the challenges we face, there are numerous opportunities. It is our collective responsibility to use the information available to us to make decisions that will serve us now, as well as in the future. For specific ideas on how you can get involved, visit [www.sactokids.org](http://www.sactokids.org).



## Demographics Result Area

The diversity of Sacramento County's population continues to grow across a range of factors, including age, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability status, and family type. As such, policy and program planning must be made with particular consideration given to target audiences and the variety of cultural factors that play into the success of an initiative. Additionally, policy and program decisions must be made with consideration given not just to the current environment, but what the environment will be in the years, and even generations, to come.

### KEY FINDINGS FOR SACRAMENTO COUNTY:

- Residents under the age of 25 are becoming increasingly diverse. Three of every five children are from a racial/ethnic minority population.
- There are more than 50 different languages spoken in the homes of Sacramento County students.
- While the proportion of the population that is under 18 is projected to have little change over the next 40 years, the proportion that is 65+ is projected to grow substantially, placing increasing burdens on the working-age population.
- Children are much more likely to be living in poverty than the population as a whole.

## Education Result Area

Education represents one of the best opportunities to influence positive outcomes throughout the life span. Most educational achievement indicators are closely correlated with employment and economic advancement. Education indicators for children in Sacramento County are mixed, with certain segments of Sacramento County's student population excelling, while others are struggling.

### KEY FINDINGS FOR SACRAMENTO COUNTY:

- Graduation rates peaked in 2005-06 and have fallen every year since.
- The number of drop outs has increased every year over that same time period.
- Sacramento County students score at or above proficient in English Language Arts and Mathematics at a rate slightly higher than the statewide average. Still, more than four of every ten students are not proficient and there are notable achievement gaps between racial and ethnic groups.
- Black and Latino students experience a large achievement gap when compared to their peers.
- There have been improvements in access to pre-school and enrollment in post-secondary education over the past decade.



## Family Economics Result Area

Family economics can have significant influence on the life outcomes of children. A stable source of income allows families to lead healthy, secure, self-sufficient lives. Unfortunately, the economic collapse has impacted all sectors of our community through primary impacts on the family and secondary impacts on purchasing power and tax base in the local economy.

### KEY FINDINGS FOR SACRAMENTO COUNTY:

- Although the cost of living has increased since 2007, average wages have decreased due to unemployment, reduced hours, and reduced wages.
- In 2010, more than 388,000 residents, or 27% of the County's population, received some form of aid from the County's Department of Human Assistance.
- A two-parent (one working) family with two children needs to earn more than \$50,000 (\$24.50/hour) in order to meet basic budget needs in Sacramento County.
- More than one-sixth of families with children live below poverty, and at least 40% do not earn enough to be self-sufficient.

## Health Result Area

Because children are often more vulnerable than the adults around them, children's health status is an indicator of the overall well-being of a community. Of course, health status also has personal and lasting impacts. A child's health status affects his or her ability to participate and learn and can have long term consequences on growth and development.

### KEY FINDINGS FOR SACRAMENTO COUNTY:

- Reported STD rates for young adults in Sacramento County are up to 2.5 times higher than reported Statewide.
- Infant mortality rates for African Americans are more than double the rate for other ethnicities.
- Most children in Sacramento County are covered for health insurance, but about 15% are not covered for dental care.
- One of every three children in Sacramento County is covered by publicly funded health insurance.



## Safety Result Area

Safety – both real and perceived – is critical to fostering a vibrant community and creating an environment in which children can thrive. Issues of crime, violence, illness, abuse and neglect all feed the perception of safety. The ability of the Sacramento County community to provide a safe environment for its children is improving in some areas – such as juvenile crime – but remains stressed in other areas – such as demand for child protective services intervention. Even within the same issue, perceptions can vary considerably between populations.

### KEY FINDINGS FOR SACRAMENTO COUNTY:

- Children under the age of 1 enter the foster care system at more than 3 times the rate that would be expected, according to their population size. They also experience the highest rates of childhood injuries and deaths.
- 55% of children under the age of 6 who are removed from their home by CPS for neglect are also found to have signs of physical abuse through medical clearance exams.
- The rate of domestic violence related calls to law enforcement is routinely higher in Sacramento County than is reported in statewide averages.
- Juvenile felony arrests have declined by 10.7% since 2000.
- In 2009 there were 5,062 runaway reports in Sacramento County, which was the lowest since 2000. However, the rate of runaway reports in Sacramento County remains 34% higher than California as a whole.

## Social and Emotional Well Being Result Area

As a whole, children in Sacramento County are resilient, despite many challenges to their healthy development. Without continuing support from the community, and without stable, committed relationships from adults, children are not able to reach their full potential, and in fact, experience quite negative outcomes.

### KEY FINDINGS FOR SACRAMENTO COUNTY:

- Nearly 90% of youth report moderate to high access to supportive assets in school and community environments.
- The percentage of children reporting that they receive psychological or emotional counseling in Sacramento County is more than double the statewide average.
- Transition age foster youth experience substantially lower rates of graduation and employment, and substantially higher rates of juvenile justice involvement and homelessness than their peers.
- Children placed in foster care in Sacramento County are half as likely to be placed with kin than is reported in statewide averages.
- The proportion of children smoking continues to decline, but the proportion of children using alcohol or other drugs has remained unchanged for much of the past decade.



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