

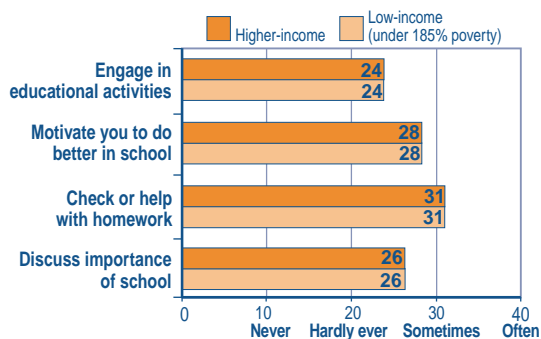
The 2002 data book represents the tenth Kids Count report focused on measuring child well-being for Michigan and its 83 counties. This year it includes a special section on adolescence with a focus on young adolescents aged 10-14. Most of the information was obtained from Michigan Middle Start student survey findings.¹

Young Adolescents

One of every seven Michigan residents is an adolescent, according to the 2000 Census. Of these roughly million and a half Michigan youth, half are in a period characterized as “early adolescence,” ages 10-14, and the other half in late adolescence, ages 15-19.

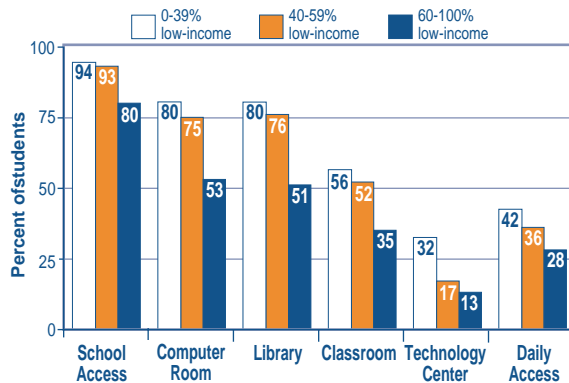
- **One of every three Michigan youth, ages 10-15, lived in a low-income family**, defined as having income less than double the federal poverty level or \$33,790 for a family of four in 2000.² Youth in Michigan’s low-income families were more than twice as likely to have a health condition that limited their activity—20 percent compared to 9 percent of youth in higher income families and five times more likely to be uninsured—15 percent compared to 3 percent.³
- **There was essentially no difference in the average level of parental involvement in education for middle grades students from low-income and higher income families.** Parents of Michigan middle grades students on *average*, were most likely to have provided homework assistance and oversight, and least likely to have participated in educational activities, such as attending school events or meetings.

Parental involvement averaged at the same levels for Michigan’s low-income and higher income families.



Source: Center for Prevention Research and Development, University of Illinois.

Michigan middle graders in schools with higher concentrations of low-income students have much less computer access.



Source: Center for Prevention Research and Development, University of Illinois.

- **Young adolescents left home alone for three hours or more averaged much higher depression scores and behavior problems.**⁴ Overall, 23 percent of Michigan middle graders reported being left on their own without adult supervision after school for three or more hours, but 29 percent of students in low-income families were in this situation compared to 20 percent of students from higher income families. Low-income youth had significantly lower participation rates in extracurricular activities than their more affluent peers.
- **Middle grade students in Michigan schools with the largest shares of low-income students had the least access to technology in school.** Eighty percent of students in schools with the largest concentrations of low-income students reported access to computers at schools, compared to 94 percent of students from schools with the largest shares of higher income students.⁵ The frequency and type of computer access was also much greater for middle graders in higher income schools; for example, 42 percent of students in the most affluent schools reported daily access to computers, compared to 28 percent of those in schools where three-fifths of the students were from low-income families.

¹ The Michigan Middle Start Survey data were collected and compiled by the Center for Prevention Research and Development at the University of Illinois.

²⁻³ National Survey of American Families. (1997-99) Tabulations by Child Trends, Inc.

⁴⁻⁵ Center for Prevention Research and Development, University of Illinois.

Executive Summary

Kids Count in Michigan

Data Book 2002

COUNTY PROFILES OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Kids Count in Michigan is part of a broad national effort to measure the well-being of children at the state and local levels, and use that information to shape efforts to improve the lives of children. The partners in the Michigan project include:

- **Michigan League for Human Services**

A statewide citizens’ organization which seeks to improve human services through research, information dissemination, advocacy, and support services to the state’s charitable associations. (517/487-5436 or toll free 800/837-5436.)

- **Michigan’s Children**

A statewide, multi-issue, independent, broad-based advocacy group which works with policy-makers, other organizations and the public to improve the quality of life for children and their families. (517/485-3500 or toll free 800/330-8674.)

The project is funded by the Annie E. Casey, Skillman, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan foundations, as well as United Ways.

The 2002 Data Book is available for \$15 plus sales tax (shipping and handling – \$3)

For copies of the book, further information or presentations, contact:



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Adolescence marks the transition to adult life, and decisions and actions during this second decade often shape lifelong opportunities.

During this period young adolescents aged 10 through 14 experience a period of rapid growth and development second only to infancy.

The capacity for complex thinking expands, as does a sense of independence in discovery of the self and a wider world. Parents, schools, and communities all have key roles to play in nurturing youth during this phase of their lives.



Michigan Trends in Child Well-Being

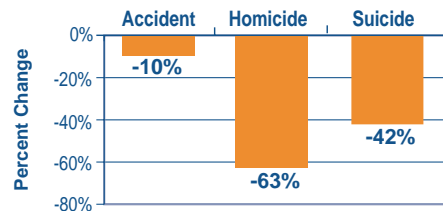
A review of trends among the core Kids Count measures showed gains for adolescents on most measures. In other areas of child well-being such as health, safety, education, and economic security, trends were mixed over the 1990s.

Michigan teens improved on all measures except high school dropout.

By the end of the decade Michigan youth were less likely to:

- **Become parents** – Michigan’s birth rate to teens aged 15-17 dropped by a third—double the national decline, with the state registering the second largest improvement in births to teens in this age group among the 50 states.⁶ In the state over the 1990s only ten counties saw their teen birth rates rise.
- **Lose their lives from an injury** – The teen injury death rate for teens aged 15-19, from accidents, homicide and suicide also fell by a third. The rates for all causes dropped over the decade with homicide injury deaths showing the largest drop. Accidents, especially those involving automobiles, remained the leading cause of injury deaths for this age group—representing two-thirds of injury deaths among Michigan youth.
- **Be arrested** – Juvenile arrest rates for index crimes for Michigan youth aged 10 through 17 plummeted—dropping by 43 percent for *violent* crimes and by 38 percent for *property* offenses.⁷ The most populous southeastern counties experienced significant declines in juvenile arrests for violent offenses, and most counties (52) saw a significant drop in juvenile arrests for property offenses.

Michigan teen injury death rates for all causes declined between 1990 and 2000.



Source: Based on data from Vital Records and Health Data Development, Michigan Department of Community Health

⁶ Kids Count Data Book 2002: State Profiles in Child Well-Being. Baltimore, Maryland: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

⁷ Seventeen year-olds are included as juveniles to fit the national definition even though in Michigan they are not considered juveniles. Violent index crimes include: murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Property index crimes include: larceny, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

High school students were less likely to graduate

– Michigan’s high school dropout rate worsened by 15 percent over the 1990s. In the 1999-00 school year, almost 7 percent of high school students left high school without a diploma—a total of 30,600 youth across the state. This annual dropout rate multiplied by the four years of high school means that roughly one of every four Michigan high school students who start the ninth grade leaves school without a diploma.

Children were less likely to live in poverty, but the share of children living in a low-income family remained level despite the economic boom.

The economic well-being of children improved with the drop in the child poverty rate over the decade. In 1999 roughly one of eight children in the state lived below the poverty level compared to one of six in 1989. Despite these improvements, in 1999 roughly 340,300 children in the state still lived in families with income inadequate to meet basic needs. Many families remain only marginally better off; one-third of school children participated in the School Lunch Program at free or reduced rates in 2001.

Infants and children were less likely to die of disease or injury, but access to prenatal care did not improve, and Michigan babies had the same odds of being born at low birthweight.

The mortality rates for infants and children aged 1 through 14 declined by almost a quarter over the decade, but all the gains in infant mortality occurred in the early 1990s. Other measures of maternal and infant health, such as less than adequate prenatal care for pregnant women and babies born at low birthweight did not improve over the decade.

Children were more likely to be involved in an investigation of abuse or neglect, and if confirmed as a victim, placed in out-of-home care.

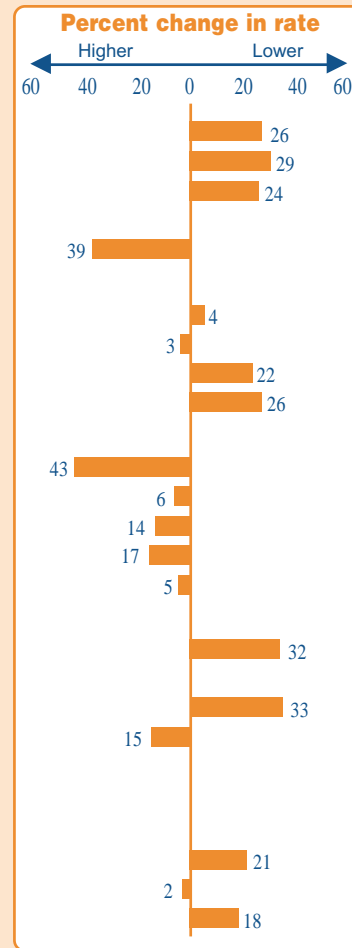
Roughly one of every fourteen children in the state was in a family investigated for child abuse or neglect in fiscal year 2001, at a rate

Michigan Trends in Child Well-Being—1990 vs 2000

	Recent year*	
	Number	Rate
Economic Security – 1999		
■ Child poverty, ages 0-17	340,254	13.4%
■ ~ages 0-4	102,664	15.6%
■ ~ages 5-17	237,590	12.7%
■ Students receiving free/reduced priced school lunches – 2001	551,330	32.1%
Child Health – annual average 1998-00		
■ Less than adequate prenatal care	33,367	24.8%
■ Low birth-weight babies	10,626	7.9%
■ Infant mortality (per 1,000)	1,091	8.1
■ Child deaths, ages 1-14 (per 100,000)	471	22.9
Child Safety (per 1,000) – 2001		
■ Children in investigated families	172,984	66.6
■ Confirmed victims of abuse or neglect	28,646	11.0
■ Children in out-of-home care	20,924	8.1
■ ~for abuse or neglect	17,494	6.7
■ ~for delinquency	3,430	1.3
Adolescence – annual average 1998-00		
■ Births to teens, ages 15-17 (per 1,000)	4,841	23.7
■ Deaths by accident, homicide, suicide for teens, ages 15-19 (per 100,000)	336	47.9
■ High school dropouts – 1999-00	30,621	6.9%
Education – 2001		
Students not meeting proficiency standards in science		
■ Fifth graders	67,996	57.7%
■ Eighth graders	88,807	80.0%
■ Eleventh graders	34,043	39.2%

* varies by availability of data

Sources: U.S. Census 2000, Michigan Departments of Community Health and Education, and Family Independence Agency.



up 43 percent since 1990. Despite this increase in investigations, the rate of children confirmed as victims of abuse or neglect rose only 6 percent. Children placed out of home for abuse or neglect, however, were more likely to live in kinship care than in 1990; the number of kinship foster care providers in Michigan almost doubled over the decade—rising from 3,300 to 6,200.

The majority of Michigan students at the elementary and middle grades levels did not meet the standard on the science MEAP in 2000-01. Almost *three* of every five fifth graders and *four* of five eighth graders did not meet the science standard in 2000-01. While only *two* of five high school students did not meet the standard, much fewer students take the MEAP at the high school level.

Summary and Conclusions

While Michigan made dramatic improvement on several dimensions of adolescent well-being over the 1990s, particularly in measures such as teen births and teen injury deaths, the state lost ground on high school dropout rates. An effective strategy for addressing the growing dropout problem would be to ensure that more young adolescents have a positive experience during the middle grades years.

- **Strengthen family supports** through outreach to enroll eligible families in available health and social welfare programs. Such programs mitigate some of the devastating effects of financial insecurity experienced by a relatively large number of youth. An additional strategy would be to target tax relief to Michigan low-income families to offset the state’s increasingly regressive tax structure.
- **Improve access to after school programs**, particularly in low-income areas. These programs should be structured to promote positive interaction with adults with whom youth could build trusting relationships. More flexibility in scheduling to allow working parents to shorten the time their young adolescents are left home alone would also ease the problem.
- **Target resources to low-income schools** where students have less access to resources at school than their higher income counterparts. Targeting focused professional development to schools with high concentrations of low-income and minority students has proved an important strategy for providing more equity in educational opportunity.
- **Invest in improving middle grades education** through school reform models such as Michigan Middle Start that group students into small learning communities and promote ongoing improvement in teaching and learning so that every child has access to effective instruction and an appropriate level of support. These strategies have demonstrated their potential to make a difference, particularly for disadvantaged students.⁸

Scientific information and survey data provide compelling evidence about the importance of supporting young adolescents and providing them an environment in which they can develop the skills to be caring and productive adults. Data also reflect the inequities faced by low-income youth. Strategic interventions during middle grades could reduce the numbers of high school dropouts and improve the life chances of Michigan youth.

⁸ Middle Start, a comprehensive reform program for schools with middle grades, was introduced in Michigan schools in 1994. Evaluation results have demonstrated much larger student achievement gains for schools implementing the program compared to similar schools without the program.