

# USING THE 2009 DATA BOOK ON LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN

**T**HIS DATA BOOK provides statistics on nearly fifty different measures of child well-being in each of Louisiana's 64 parishes. The indicators are selected to provide policy makers, professionals, and community members with the information they need about children's health, economic well-being, safety, and education.

The Data Book provides two pages of information about the indicator, including definitions, data sources, and data for each parish. All data was provided by or available from state and federal agencies. Standard mathematical calculations were used to calculate rates and percentages. Details on how each rate or percentage was calculated are provided in the "left-hand" page that accompanies each page of data. The graphs and maps shown here were developed by Matt Perry, David Jack Browning and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Center. Unless otherwise stated, the data source for charts and maps is the same as the primary data source for the indicator.

## UNDERSTANDING THE DATA

**Interpreting Rates:** Data for many indicators include rates, which account for differences in population size. Use the rates to compare the rate for your parish to that of the state or other parishes in your area.

**Time Trends:** Data for many indicators include data for more than one time period. Use this data to see if the number is increasing or decreasing over time. If the indicator provides rates for different time periods, use these to see how your parish has changed over time, taking into account changes in the population. This is particularly useful for those parishes that experienced substantial demographic change in the past several years, including parishes in hurricane-affected regions. Data for additional time periods is available for many indicators at the KIDS COUNT Data Center:

[www.kidscount.org/datacenter/la](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter/la).

**Indicators without Rates:** You can estimate participation in your parish for many indicators without rates. First, calculate the percentage of all program participants that live in your parish. Then, compare that to the percentage of children in Louisiana who live in your parish. The two numbers should be similar. If the percentage of participants who live in your parish is smaller than the percentage of children who live in your parish, then participation in the program is lower in your parish than the statewide average.

**Racial Disparity Ratios:** A racial disparity ratio was calculated for many indicators that include racially disaggregated data. The ratio provides

readers with an idea of how large (or small) a rate for black children is, relative to the rate for white children. The ratio was calculated by dividing the rate for black children by the corresponding rate for white children. In order to maintain consistency of the ratio's meaning across both "positive" and "negative" indicators, ratios were always calculated based upon the rate for the relevant negative outcome. For example, the racial disparity ratio for "adequate prenatal care" reflects the difference in the rate at which black women received less-than-adequate or no prenatal care compared to the corresponding white rate. Statewide, births to black women were 1.9 times as likely as births to white women to have occurred to women who had not received adequate prenatal care.

- A racial disparity ratio of one means that the rates of black and white children are the same. Public school attendance rates for both black and white youth were 94% in 2006, so the racial disparity ratio was 1.0, indicating no racial disparity.
- A ratio greater than one indicates that the black rate was higher than the white rate. For example, the racial disparity ratio is 1.9 for low birthweight babies, meaning that the black rate (15.8%) is 1.9 times as large as the corresponding white rate (8.3%).
- A ratio of less than one indicates that the white rate is higher than the black rate. The closer this number is to zero, the greater the difference between the white and black rates.

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# USING THE 2009 DATA BOOK ON LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN (CONTINUED)

## CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

In instances in which racial disparity ratios were not calculated, but disaggregated data is provided, readers can estimate whether or not a particular racial or ethnic group is over or under-represented. For example, readers can compare the percentage of children in foster care who are white in their parish to the percentage of children in their parish who are white. If there is no over- or under-representation, the two figures will be about the same.

## DATA REMINDERS

**Timeframes:** Data are based on different timeframes (e.g. school years, fiscal years, calendar years, and three-year averages). Readers should refer to the indicator's definition and data source to determine the reported time period.

**Low Number Events:** Rates are not reported for parishes in which the number or rate of events is too small to be considered meaningful. In most cases, raw data is not displayed if the number is greater than zero but less than five. In many cases, rates were suppressed if they were based on fewer than 20 events.

**Rates:** Rates may vary, so readers should refer to the heading to determine how to interpret a rate (i.e. which rates are calculated per 100, per 1,000, or per 10,000).

## KIDS COUNT DATA CENTER ONLINE

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, which funds Agenda for Children's KIDS COUNT work, provides data on hundreds of different measures of child well-being through its online KIDS COUNT Data Center: [www.kidscount.org/datacenter](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter). The Data Center's "Data across States" system allows users to easily compare Louisiana to other states on various indicators of child well-being. The Data Center's "Data by State" system allows users to easily compare data for their parish to other parishes within Louisiana.

Both systems allow users to:

- rank geographies
- create graphs showing trends over time
- create maps
- save charts and maps for inclusion in presentations and reports
- create a web site "widget" that allows readers to see KIDS COUNT data without leaving your site

