

Profile of Child Well-Being in Palo Alto County



Population Profile

The population 17 years of age or younger in Palo Alto County in 2000 was 2,440, a decrease of 14.3 percent since 1990. According to projections, the youth population will decline to 1,946 by 2020.

In Palo Alto County, youth accounted for 24.0 percent of the total population in 2000 compared to 25.1 percent statewide. Minority youth in the county numbered 81 in 2000 and are projected to decrease to 72 by 2020.

1. Population 17 Years or Younger

	Palo Alto County			
	1990	2000	2010*	2020*
Total population	10,669	10,147	9,537	9,216
Percent 17 or younger	26.7	24.0	20.2	21.1
Population 17 or younger	2,848	2,440	1,924	1,946
0 to 4 years	680	550	487	534
5 to 9 years	846	622	507	539
10 to 14 years	854	733	566	538
15 to 17 years	468	535	364	335
Minority^ Population 17 or younger	n/a	81	36	72
0 to 4 years	n/a	21	12	20
5 to 9 years	n/a	14	8	20
10 to 14 years	n/a	32	6	20
15 to 17 years	n/a	14	10	12
Female Population 17 or younger	1,382	1,199	913	919
0 to 4 years	336	266	232	254
5 to 9 years	436	304	240	254
10 to 14 years	403	361	272	255
15 to 17 years	207	268	169	156
Male Population 17 or younger	1,466	1,241	1,011	1,027
0 to 4 years	344	284	255	280
5 to 9 years	410	318	267	285
10 to 14 years	451	372	294	283
15 to 17 years	261	267	195	179

^ Minority includes all persons except white non-Hispanics.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Summary File 1, *Projections by Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2004

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Health Profile

As the number of total births in Palo Alto County rose from 1999 to 2003, the number of births to teens decreased by 9. In 1999, births to teens accounted for 10.6 percent of total births in the county compared to 1.7 percent in 2003.

Teen parenting is used as a predictor of future economic hardship for both parents and children. Teen parents are often less able to provide positive, safe and caring environments, or family stability.

In Palo Alto County, 7.8 percent of total births in 2003 were low birthweight compared to 6.6 percent statewide.

Low birthweight (less than 5.5 pounds or 2,500 grams) can be an indicator of mothers not receiving adequate prenatal care and is often a good predictor of future health and developmental complications.

Early and ongoing prenatal care increases the chances of delivering healthy, full-term, and normal weight babies. Rates are per 1,000 live births.

For the period from 1998 to 2001, the rate of mothers in Palo Alto County receiving prenatal care during the first trimester of their pregnancy was 903.3 compared to 869.8 statewide.

2. Births to Teens, Low Birthweight Births, Pre-natal Care, and Immunizations

Year	Births to Teens		Low Birthweight Births		1st Trimester Prenatal Care		Full Immunizations*	
	Palo Alto County	State	Palo Alto County	State	Palo Alto County	State	Palo Alto County	State
	n	% of total births	n	% of total births	rate (per 1,000 live births)	rate (per 1,000 live births)	% fully immunized	% fully immunized
1999	11	10.6	7	6.7	---	---	93.0	84.0
2000	14	12.7	3	2.7	---	---	94.0	86.0
2001	7	6.8	8	7.8	903.3	869.8	90.0	88.0
2002	7	6.4	8	7.3	n/a	n/a	89.0	85.0
2003	2	1.7	9	7.8	n/a	n/a	83.0	89.0

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health

*NOTE: Immunization data reflect only one site per county so should be interpreted with caution.

In Palo Alto County in 2003, 83 percent of children 24 months of age were reported to be fully immunized compared to 93 percent in 1999. Percentages for the state were 89 in 2003 and 84 in 1999.

Fully immunized = 4 DTP/DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 Hep. B by 24 months of age.



Infant mortality is considered one of the best overall measures of health care accessibility and quality in that it measures the health of the most vulnerable in a given population. The infant mortality rate is the number of infants who die before their first birthday per 1,000 live births.

In Palo Alto County, the infant mortality rate from 2001 to 2003 was 3.0, lower than the county rate of 1995-1998 and lower than the statewide rate of 5.5 in 2001-2003 period.

NOTE: Due to the relatively low number of births, infant deaths, and child deaths per year in many of Iowa's counties, users are encouraged to use 3-5 year averages for comparative purposes. These are presented in Tables 3 and 4.



3. Infant Mortality

Year	Palo Alto County		State	
	n	rate	rate	rate
1995-1997	3	9.5	7.1	7.1
1998-2000	3	9.3	6.2	6.2
2001-2003	1	3.0	5.5	5.5

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health

From 2000 to 2002, the child death rate in Palo Alto County was 0.0 compared to the state's rate of 0.2

Child deaths include deaths to all children ages 1 to 14. Child death rates are the number of deaths in this population per 1,000 total population age 1 to 14.

4. Child Death Rates

Year	Palo Alto County		State	
	n	rate	rate	rate
2000-2002	0	0.0	0.2	0.2

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health



Education Profile

In Palo Alto County, 37 children were enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten during the 2003-04 school year. This was a 10 child increase from 2000-01.

Pre-Kindergarten students often demonstrate stronger early reading and math skills than non PK students.

5. Pre-Kindergarten Enrollment

	Palo Alto County	State
2000-2001	27	5,797
2001-2002	18	5,714
2002-2003	16	5,949
2003-2004	37	6,907

Source: Iowa Department of Education

The PAK Empowerment Area reported at least 50.6 percent of its kindergartners consistently displaying school-ready behaviors in the five areas. Statewide at least 35.9 percent of kindergarten students were reported as school ready.

"School readiness" is the result of kindergarten teachers being asked to assess their students in 5 areas: communication skills, cognitive skills, self-management skills, motor skills, and social-emotional development. Teachers report the degree to which behaviors within these five areas are observable ranging from "rarely" to "consistently".

6. School Readiness*, 2002-2003

	Empowerment Area	State
Motor Skills ¹	54.5	48.8
Communication Skills ²	50.6	35.9
Cognitive Skills ³	60.1	44.5
Social/Emotional Dev. ⁴	65.0	50.1
Self-Management Skills ⁵	64.1	43.0

* Percent reported "consistently observed"

Source: Iowa Department of Education

- ¹ Include coordination and balance, using scissors, etc.
- ² Include the ability to ask and answer questions, communicate needs, etc.
- ³ Include using a variety of words to describe a shape or color, ability to sort objects into categories, etc.
- ⁴ Includes ability to build relationships with adults and peers, express emotions and feelings, etc.
- ⁵ Includes ability to follow classroom rules and routines, take responsibility for personal belongings, etc.

Economic Profile

During the 2003-04 school year, 29.4 percent of K-12 students in Palo Alto County were eligible for free or reduced-price school compared to 28.6 percent in 2000-01. Statewide a total of 144,000 students (30.0%) were eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Because eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals is an annual measure, it is a good indicator of the economic well-being of children in a community. Families with incomes 135% or less of the federal poverty threshold are eligible for free meals, those with incomes 136% to 180% of poverty are eligible for reduced-price meals.

7. Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price School Meals

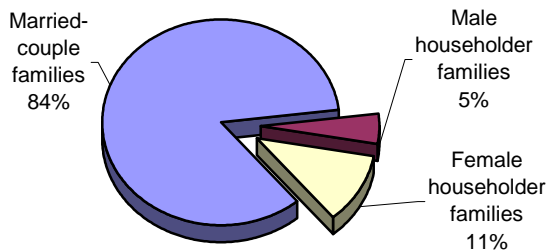
	Number Eligible for Free Meals		Number Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals		Percentage Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals	
	Palo Alto County	State	Palo Alto County	State	Palo Alto County	State
2000-01	283	93,823	243	37,754	28.6	26.7
2001-02	277	93,062	197	36,492	26.8	26.7
2002-03	323	100,544	178	36,870	29.4	28.5
2003-04	336	107,324	151	36,907	29.4	30.0

Source: Iowa Department of Education

Family Living Profile

While the majority of the 2,345 children under 18 years of age in Palo Alto County in 2000 resided in a two-parent family, 15.8 percent lived in a family headed by a single parent.

Children by Family Type, 2000



Source: Census 2000, SF1, US Bureau of the Census

In Palo Alto County, 71.1 percent of children under 6 living in a family or subfamily had all parents in the labor force compared to 71.4 percent statewide. All parents includes both parents in a married-couple family and the parent in a male- or female-headed family.

8. Employment Status of Parents with Young Children, 2000

	Palo Alto County		State
	n	%	%
Total Own Children in Families			
Under 6 years:	700		
Living with 2 parents	519		
Both parents in labor force	373	71.9	69.2
Living with father only	32		
Father in labor force	32	100.0	88.8
Living with mother only	149		
Mother in labor force	93	62.4	71.4

Source: Census 2000, SF3, US Bureau of the Census

Safety Profile

The number of confirmed cases of child abuse or neglect in Palo Alto County in 2003 was 43, an increase of 16 since 1999.

9. Confirmed Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

	Palo Alto County	State
1999	27	9,588
2000	75	10,821
2001	64	12,793
2002	59	12,292
2003	43	14,936

Source: Iowa Department of Human Services

In 2003, Palo Alto County reported 63 Group A and 0 Group B arrests per 100,000 juveniles compared to rates of 2,003 and 1,180, respectively, for the state.

Source and further details available @ http://www.dps.state.ia.us/documents_repository/DPS/2003/iacrim e/iacrime.htm

Juvenile arrests are reported in 2 groups, Group A offenses include such crimes as murder, rape, burglary and drug violations while Group B offenses include curfew, drunkenness and runaways.