

Profile of Child Well-Being in Polk County



Population Profile

The population 17 years of age or younger in Polk County in 2000 was 96,300, an increase of 17.5 percent since 1990. According to projections, the youth population will grow to 119,516 by 2020.

In Polk County, youth accounted for 25.7 percent of the total population in 2000 compared to 25.1 percent statewide. Minority youth in the county numbered 18,766 in 2000 and are projected to increase to 32,892 by 2020.

1. Population 17 Years or Younger

	Polk County			
	1990	2000	2010*	2020*
Total population	327,140	374,601	412,903	450,558
Percent 17 or younger	25.1	25.7	25.4	26.5
Population 17 or younger	81,971	96,300	105,078	119,516
0 to 4 years	24,860	27,955	31,518	35,636
5 to 9 years	23,748	27,210	29,471	33,876
10 to 14 years	21,454	25,945	27,536	31,597
15 to 17 years	11,909	15,190	16,553	18,407
Minority [^] Population 17 or younger	n/a	18,766	23,420	32,892
0 to 4 years	n/a	6,111	7,828	10,250
5 to 9 years	n/a	5,447	6,596	9,382
10 to 14 years	n/a	4,662	5,516	8,504
15 to 17 years	n/a	2,546	3,480	4,756
Female Population 17 or younger	40,025	46,897	51,348	58,829
0 to 4 years	12,080	13,575	15,450	17,454
5 to 9 years	11,564	13,372	14,396	16,646
10 to 14 years	10,452	12,525	13,259	15,581
15 to 17 years	5,929	7,425	8,243	9,148
Male Population 17 or younger	41,946	49,403	53,730	60,687
0 to 4 years	12,780	14,380	16,068	18,182
5 to 9 years	12,184	13,838	15,075	17,230
10 to 14 years	11,002	13,420	14,277	16,016
15 to 17 years	5,980	7,765	8,310	9,259

[^] 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

Data and support for this profile provided by:

Margie Hanson
Office of Social and Economic
Trend Analysis (SETA)
Iowa State University
www.seta.iastate.edu
e-mail: seta@iastate.edu

Michael Crawford
Iowa Kids Count
Child and Family Policy Center
Des Moines, Iowa
www.cfpciowa.org/ipkc.shtml
e-mail: mccrawford@cfpciowa.org
phone: (515) 280-9027

Beth Henning
State Data Center
State Library of Iowa
Des Moines, Iowa
www.iowadatacenter.org

e-mail:
beth.henning@lib.state.ia.us
phone: (515) 281-4350

Health Profile

As the number of total births in Polk County rose from 1999 to 2003, the number of births to teens decreased by 43. In 1999, births to teens accounted for 10.2 percent of total births in the county compared to 8.8 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 Polk County, 7.4 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 Polk County receiving prenatal care during the first trimester of their pregnancy was 865.4 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*	
	Polk County	State	Polk County	State	Polk County	State	Polk 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	606	10.2	399	6.7	---	---	94.0	84.0
2000	618	9.9	387	6.2	---	---	91.0	86.0
2001	550	9.0	414	6.8	865.4	869.8	90.0	88.0
2002	539	8.8	393	6.4	n/a	n/a	80.0	85.0
2003	563	8.8	472	7.4	n/a	n/a	89.0	89.0

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health

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

In Polk County in 2003, 89 percent of children 24 months of age were reported to be fully immunized compared to 94 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 Polk County, the infant mortality rate from 2001 to 2003 was 6.0, lower than the county rate of 1995-1998 and higher 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	Polk County		State	
	n	rate	rate	rate
1995-1997	131	7.7	7.1	7.1
1998-2000	135	7.5	6.2	6.2
2001-2003	111	6.0	5.5	5.5

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health

From 2000 to 2002, the child death rate in Polk County was 0.2 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	Polk County		State	
	n	rate	rate	rate
2000-2002	52	0.2	0.2	0.2

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health



Education Profile

In Polk County, 911 children were enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten during the 2003-04 school year. This was a 98 child increase from 2000-01.

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

5. Pre-Kindergarten Enrollment

	Polk County	State
2000-2001	813	5,797
2001-2002	878	5,714
2002-2003	754	5,949
2003-2004	911	6,907

Source: Iowa Department of Education

The Human Services Planning Alliance Area reported at least 19.9 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	24.1	48.8
Communication Skills ²	28.3	35.9
Cognitive Skills ³	26.3	44.5
Social/Emotional Dev. ⁴	29.0	50.1
Self-Management Skills ⁵	19.9	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, 30.5 percent of K-12 students in Polk County were eligible for free or reduced-price school compared to 28.3 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

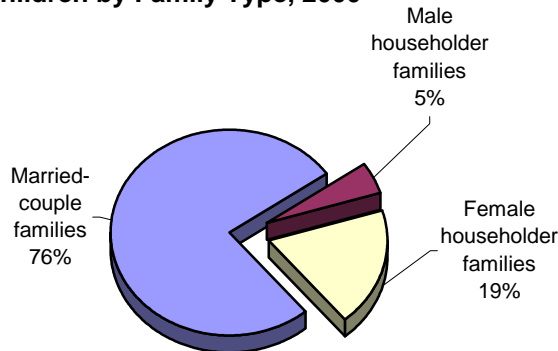
	Number Eligible for Free Meals		Number Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals		Percentage Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals	
	Polk County	State	Polk County	State	Polk County	State
2000-01	12,703	93,823	4,883	37,754	28.3	26.7
2001-02	12,648	93,062	4,504	36,492	27.5	26.7
2002-03	14,021	100,544	4,481	36,870	29.7	28.5
2003-04	14,680	107,324	4,383	36,907	30.5	30.0

Source: Iowa Department of Education

Family Living Profile

While the majority of the 88,711 children under 18 years of age in Polk County in 2000 resided in a two-parent family, 23.7 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 Polk County, 69.3 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.

Safety Profile

The number of confirmed cases of child abuse or neglect in Polk County in 2003 was 2308, an increase of 919 since 1999.

9. Confirmed Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

	Polk County	State
1999	1,389	9,588
2000	1,633	10,821
2001	1,875	12,793
2002	1,898	12,292
2003	2,308	14,936

Source: Iowa Department of Human Services

In 2003, Polk County reported 2,387 Group A and 390 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.

8. Employment Status of Parents with Young Children, 2000

	Polk County		State
	n	%	%
Total Own Children in Families			
Under 6 years:	32,775		
Living with 2 parents	25,359		
Both parents in labor force	16,847	66.4	69.2
Living with father only	1,668		
Father in labor force	1,512	90.6	88.8
Living with mother only	5,748		
Mother in labor force	4,365	75.9	71.4

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