

## April 2009 Issue

*Center on the Family, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*

### WHAT'S NEW

1. Hawai'i Improved Child Well-Being Since 2000
2. The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): Spotlight on Hawai'i
3. Increase in Teen Pregnancy in Hawai'i

#### **1. Hawai'i Improved Child Well-Being Since 2000**

The KIDS COUNT working paper, "Ranking States on Improvement in Child Well-Being Since 2000," shows that Hawai'i's children had increasingly positive well-being between 2000 and 2005. The state showed an improvement of 10 percent or more on the KIDS COUNT Child Well-Being Index (KCCWBI), which draws from the following ten points:

- low birth weight
- infant mortality weight
- child mortality weight, ages 1-14
- teen death rates, ages 15-19
- teen birth rates, ages 15-19
- high school dropout rates, ages 16-19
- teens not working or in school, ages 16-19
- underemployed parents
- children living in poverty
- children in single-parent families

During this five-year period, the high school dropout rate improved by more than 36 percent, and the teen birth rate by more than 22 percent. Because of positive trends evidenced in these two examples and more, Hawai'i ranked fourth highest in the nation for improving the conditions for children statewide. Only 35 of the 50 states showed similarly positive trends.

For the complete paper, please see

<http://www.aecf.org/~media/PublicationFiles/OHare%20%20Lamb%20March%202009%20Paper.pdf>

#### **2. The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): Spotlight on Hawai'i**

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey monitors health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. The Hawai'i YRBS is conducted every two years on ninth through twelfth grade public school

students throughout the state.

Through comparing students from Hawai'i and the nation, the 2007 YRBS shows that Hawai'i students are at less risk than students nationwide for certain behaviors, including current cigarette use (12.8 percent compared to 20.0 percent), current alcohol use (29.1 percent compared to 44.7 percent), and current sexual activity (23.6 percent compared to 35.0 percent).

However, some of Hawai'i's youth are at greater risk in comparison to the nation for other behaviors, including offering, selling, or being given an illegal drug on school property (36.2 percent compared to 22.3 percent), seriously considering suicide (18.5 percent compared to 14.5 percent), and not attending physical education classes daily (92.2 percent compared to 69.7 percent).

For the complete survey, please see

[http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/states/yrbs07\\_hawaii\\_us\\_comparison.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/states/yrbs07_hawaii_us_comparison.pdf)

### **3. Increase in Teen Pregnancy in Hawai'i**

The latest Child Trends Research Brief states that the projected number of teen mothers in Hawai'i is growing. At 19 percent, the state is slightly higher than the national average. The increase in teen pregnancy after a period of decline is cause for concern. Child Trends highlights the importance of addressing this phenomenon by stating:

*"Teenage childbearing has negative consequences both for the mothers involved and for their children. . . . Teen mothers and their children experience poorer educational, health, economic, and developmental outcomes. . . . This is the case even after accounting for [how] teen mothers tend to be from disadvantaged backgrounds prior to giving birth. Given such evidence, policymakers, program providers, and the general public share a keen interest in preventing early motherhood."*

For the complete brief, please see

[http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child\\_Trends-2009\\_03\\_19\\_RB\\_PercentTeenMothers.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_03_19_RB_PercentTeenMothers.pdf)

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