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1. Connections to Communities (Hawai‘i Family Touchstones Feature III)

The following is the last installment of Tracking the Well-being of Hawai‘i's Families, a three-part feature concerning children within the context of their families in Hawai‘i. These features are compiled by Hawai‘i Family Touchstones, a project of the Center on the Family. The December 2009 E-Bulletin presented recent survey findings on Hawai‘i's families with children under 18 years, while the January 2010 issue contained indicators of family interactions and relationships that promote family strength and well-being. This final update presents data on how Hawai‘i's families interact with their communities.

A recent survey of Hawai‘i's families with children under 18 years provides a picture of what families offer to their communities, and what the communities offer them for sustained well-being:

- In Hawai‘i, 59.3% of parents indicated that they volunteer at a church, for a charity, or for a community group.
- Nearly two-thirds (61.5%) of Hawai‘i's families participate in community activities such as neighborhood celebrations. Participation in community events generates commitment and care for the communities in which families live, and provides opportunities to expand their networks, strengthen bonds, and build trust among neighbors.
- In Hawai‘i, 89.1% of families indicated they can rely on another person in their community, outside of the family, for help in time of need.
- Close to three quarters (72.1%) of Hawai‘i's families feel safe in their communities—a perception that affects a family's daily behavior, determining whether children play outdoors, and the families' activities and interactions near their home.

For additional family-related indicators, visit the Data Center at http://www.uhfamily.hawaii.edu/
2. **Updated Hawai'i Indicators in the Online KIDS COUNT Data Center**

Hawai'i state and county data have been updated for the following indicators and can be accessed via the national KIDS COUNT Data Center at [http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/StateLanding.aspx?state=HI](http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/StateLanding.aspx?state=HI)

- Average daily school attendance: overall
- Stability in students' school enrollment
- Poverty rate: children and youth, ages 0–17
- Math proficiency: 8th graders
- Families eating together regularly
- Families engaging in cultural practices
- Juvenile violent crimes
- High school graduates
- College graduates
- Household size
- Special education students: elementary
- High school seniors graduating
- Teen pregnancy rate
- SAT reading proficiency: intermediate
- Student suspensions
- Family interactions: cousins
- Age at first marriage: men
- SAT reading proficiency: elementary
- SAT math proficiency: intermediate
- Juvenile status offenses
- Juvenile drug-related arrests
- High school seniors with college plans
- Private high schools
- Math proficiency: elementary
- Community participation

3. **Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All 50 States**

The above study was conducted by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy and funded in part by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. It assesses tax systems across the 50 states and the District of Columbia in terms of state and local taxes paid by different income groups in 2007, taking into account tax changes enacted through October 2009.

- The key finding of this study is that most state tax systems are regressive and draw a far greater proportion of income from middle- and low-income families than from the wealthy.
- While Hawai'i is not among the top ten states with the most regressive tax systems, it ranks sixth among the top ten states exacting the highest taxes on the poor.
  - On average, Hawai'i's poor families pay 12.2% of their total income in state and local taxes compared to Washington, the nation's highest at 17.3%, and Indiana, the nation's tenth highest at 11.9%.
o Despite being “low-tax” states for poor families in terms of income tax, many of these ten states' disproportionate reliance on sales and excise taxes results in some of the nation's highest taxes on low-income families.

The full report can be downloaded at www.itepnet.org/whopays3.pdf

4. State Budget Cuts: America’s Kids Pay the Price
This report was produced by the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies. It gives an elaborative list of budget cuts that affect children, showing how 42 states terminated programs for children such as public health programs, higher education programs, programs for children with disabilities, and K-12 and early education programs including child care. The information on budget cuts in Hawai'i details the following:

- Education funding was reduced by $1.8 billion.
- Schools were closed three weeks early.
- Schools were closed on Fridays for the remainder of the school year—leaving 170,000 children in need of alternative child care arrangements.
- The state budget gap for FY2010 was $683 million (13.0% of the state's general fund budget).


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