Poverty and Missouri’s Children

- The number of children under the age of five living in poverty increased from 20% in 2003 to 23% in 2005.³
- By 2005, the number of children age 5-17 living in poverty increased from 15% in 2003 to 18%.³
- Among children who reside in low income families (i.e., family income is less than twice the federal poverty threshold) in 2007⁴:
  - 44% are children under age 6 and 39% are children under age 18.
  - 51% are children who have at least one parent who is employed full-time year round.
  - 19% are children whose parent(s) is not employed.
  - 56% are Latino children, an increase from 52% in 2006.
  - 72% are Black children, an increase from 63% in 2005.
  - 33% are White children, a slight increase from 31% in 2005.
  - 56% reside in rural communities, an increase from 52% in 2005.
  - 50% reside in urban communities, an increase from 45% in 2005.
  - 30% reside in suburban communities, an increase from 26% in 2005.
- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Missouri was at 34% of the federal poverty guideline.⁵
- In St. Louis City, 32% of the children are poor, which is down from 39% last year, yet remains significantly higher than both the state and national average of 18%.⁶

Education of Missouri’s Children

- When compared to other Midwest states, the eligibility level for child care subsidy funds is unfavorably low.⁷
  However, Missouri increased the eligibility level from 110% of poverty to 128% of poverty in 2006.⁸
- The average annual cost for full-time center-based infant care is $6,539 and $4,836 for a 4-year old child; this is 30% of the median income for a single parent.⁹
- Between 2001 and 2007, Missouri added 10,000 licensed child care spaces and the number of accredited child care facilities also increased from 345 to 547 during this same period.⁴ School entry assessment data, however, indicates 25% of children are not academically ready to enter kindergarten.⁸
- The number of children with Limited English Proficiency increased from 11,535 in 2002 to 19,092 in 2006.⁸
- In 2006, the percent of 4th grade students performing below proficiency, according to the U.S. Department of Education, for their grade level in reading was 68% and 69% in math.¹⁰ Only 33% and 19% of 4th graders meet basic reading and math levels respectively.⁹
- Drop-out rates for 9th - 12th graders has increased from 3.7% in 2005 to 4.1% in 2006.⁸
- From 2002-2006 there was a steady decrease in the number of high school graduates going into the workforce and more entering either 2-year or 4-year college or university programs upon graduation in 2006.⁸
- When comparing the cost of child care for a 4-year-old child living in an urban area of Missouri, the cost exceeds tuition at a 4-year public college ($4,784 versus $3,701).¹¹

Nutrition of Missouri’s Children

- The percentage of children living in families receiving food stamps increased from 26% in 2002 to 31% in 2006.⁸
- The number of students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program has increased by 36,000 since 2002 for a total of 365,919 students in 2006.⁸
Health of Missouri’s Children

- The percent of Missouri mothers receiving late or no prenatal care in 2005 was 2.3%; the national average is 3.5%.6
- Of all Missouri babies born in 2005, 8.1% were low birth weight compared with the 2004 rate of 8.3%.6
- The number of two year old children properly immunized has increased since 2002 from 78% to 84% in 2006. However, the rate of immunization was 85% and 86% for 2003 and 2004, which indicates a slight decrease in the past few years.6
- Of all Missouri’s children, 39% are eligible for Medicaid/SCHIP, but only 81% of eligible children were enrolled in 2007.12

Welfare of Missouri’s Children

- In 2007, there were 6,576 children who were victims of substantiated child abuse*, which represents a steady decline from 10,080 in 2003.13
  - Neglect: 3,291 substantiated cases (50%)
  - Physical Abuse: 1,916 substantiated cases (29.1%)
  - Sexual Abuse: 1,746 substantiated cases (26.6%)
  - Emotional Maltreatment: 404 substantiated cases (6.1%)
  - Medical Neglect: 187 substantiated cases (2.8%)
  - Educational Neglect: 142 substantiated cases (2.2)

*Children could be classified in up to 6 types of abuse so the number of cases exceeds 6,576 and the percents add up to more than 100%
- In 2006, there were 27 children who died from substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect. That number increased to 46 in 2007.13
- In 2007, Department of Social Services had custody of 9,818 children who spent an average of 27 months in foster care (4,614 with foster care parents; 2,750 in relative care; 1,577 in residential treatment facilities; 110 in pre-adoptive homes.)14
- The number of children aging out of foster care remained stable between 2003 and 2006 with 353, 363, 328, 362 children aging out of the system for those 4 years respectively.8
- In 2006, there were 1,268 children adopted from state custody and 1,843 children waiting for adoption from state custody. Over half of the children in state custody are 9-18 years of age (29 % age 15+).8

Teen Pregnancy in Missouri

- In 2006, there were 2,828 births to teen mothers between the ages of 15-17, an increase from 2,555 in 2005.8
- The number of babies born to mothers under the age of 15 decreased from 134 in 20007 to 107 in 2006.8
- The number of births to mothers with less than a high school diploma has increased from 14,267 in 2001 to 15,279 in 2006. Despite the increase, the rate has remained less than 1 in 5 of all births in Missouri.8

Substance Use by Missouri’s Children

- Between 2005/2006, an estimated 43,000 children ages 12-17 were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol, which is a decrease of 5,000 from the 2003/2004 estimates of 48,000.15
- Among Missouri students in grades 6-12:
  - Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana are the most commonly used substances and the rate of use for all
    three substances increases with age.16
  - The percentage of students reporting recent alcohol use by grade level was 7% among 6th graders, 24%
    among 8th graders, 39% among 10th graders and 50% among 12th graders.16
  - The average rate of binge drinking (5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row) was 29% for 30-day prior
    use, and highest among 12th graders (35%).15

Violence and Missouri’s Children

- Between 2006 and 2007, there was a 20% decrease in juvenile arrests (40,093 children younger than 18 were
  arrested in 200717 compared to 49,659 arrests in 200618). While these decreases in juvenile arrests are positive,
  the 2007 numbers are still a 33% increase over the 2005 arrests of 26,874 youth.19
- Of the juvenile arrests in 2007, 540 were for possession of a weapon and 1,431 were for violent crimes.17
- In 2003, 1,413 children were in juvenile correction facilities in Missouri compared to 1,293 in 2006.20
- In Missouri, 43 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in 2006, compared with 44 in 2005 and
  37 in 2004.21
The Center for Family Policy & Research is housed in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The Center’s mission is to create and disseminate research-based analyses to promote the well-being of families through informed public policy and program development.

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