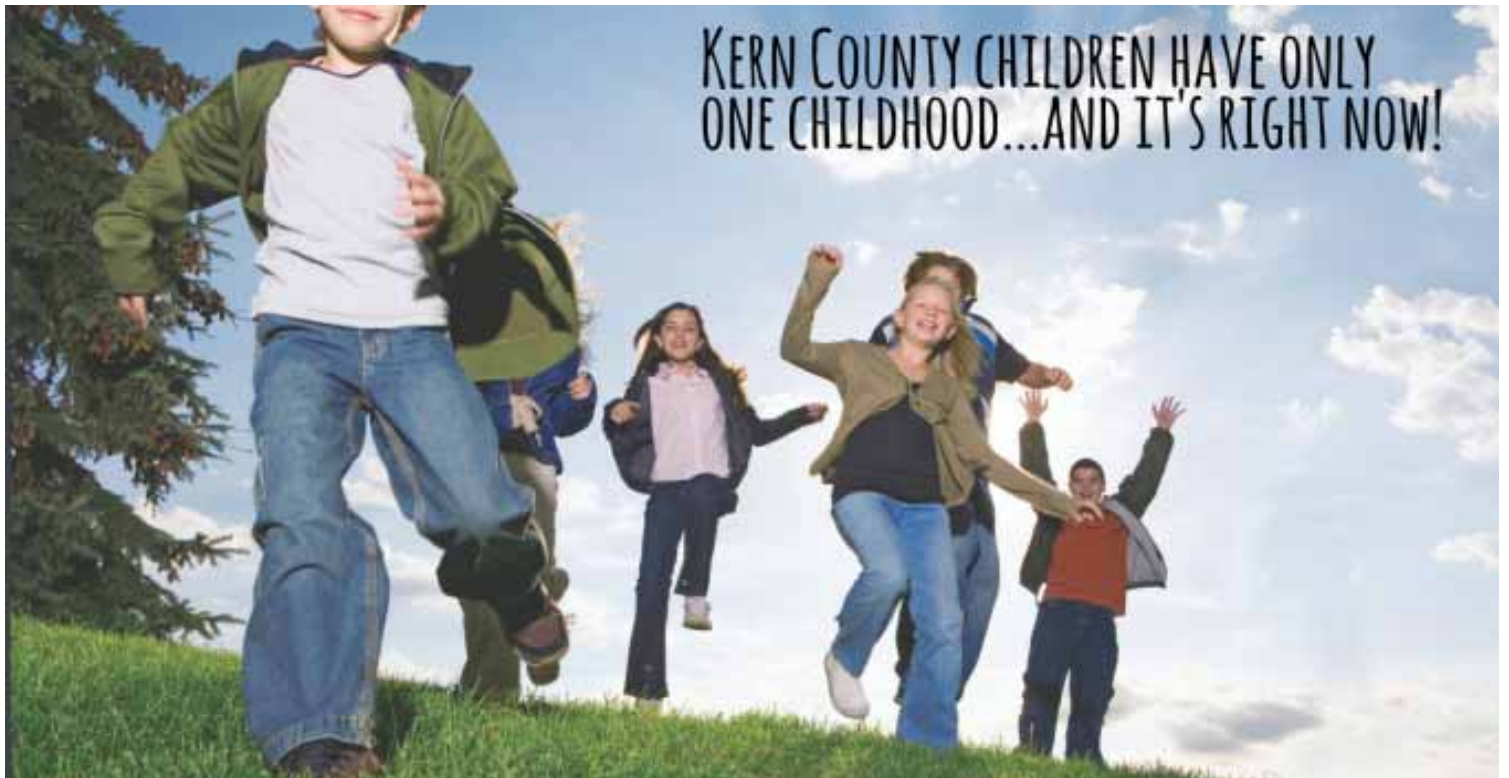




Kern County Network for Children
Our Children. Our Community.

Important Facts About Kern's Children 2019



For More Information Go To:

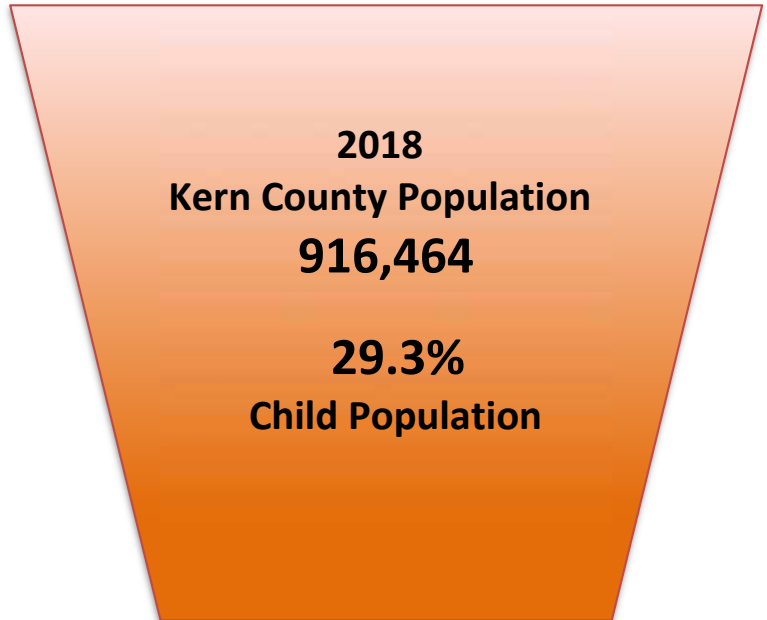
kidsdata.org

A Program of  Lucile Packard Foundation
for Children's Health

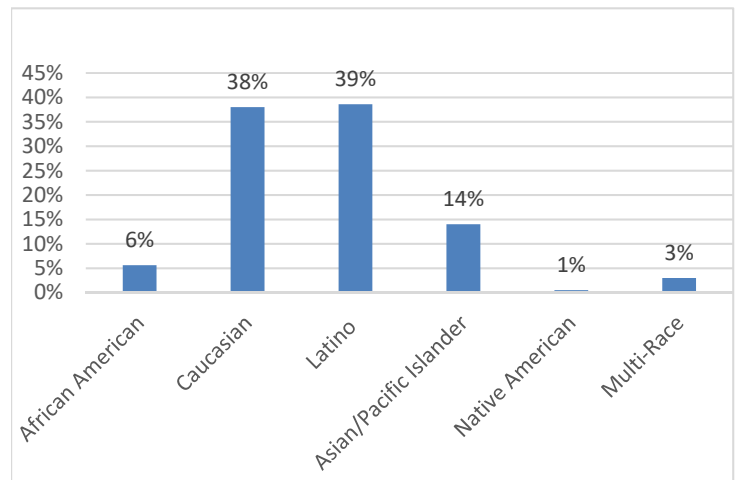
Kern County Children & Families

Tracking child population helps project a community's potential needs for education, child care, health care, and other services for children. The diversity of Kern County's population continues across a range of factors, including age, race/ethnicity, language, and family type. Understanding the demographic composition of the child population can guide investments that will best support Kern County children and youth in the future.

- **Kern County continues to be one of the youngest counties in the state.** Kern County's child population in 2018 was 256,078. Children represented 28% of the county population. 32% of Kern County children were under age 6 years old.
- **Latino children made up the largest racial/ethnic group among Kern's child population.** In 2018, 39% of Kern County children were Latino and 39% were Caucasian. According to 2018 population data, 6% of Kern's children were African American, 14% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% were multi-cultural and less than 1% were Native American.
- **A small percentage of Kern County children were born outside the United States.** In 2016, 5.4% of children under age 18 living in Kern County were born outside the United States.
- **Students in Kern County public schools are linguistically diverse.** In 2016, 41,179 (23% of total county enrollment) were English Learners. Spanish was the most commonly-spoken language after English.
- **Nearly half of all Kern County households were raising children in 2017.** In Kern County, 43.3% of all Kern County households had children under age 18 years. This figure includes married-couple households 57% and 27% of children are in households were single mothers raising children and 10% were being raised by single fathers.
- **U.S. Census Bureau four-year estimates showed that from 2012 – 2016, 43% of Kern County children ages 0-17 lived with one or more foreign-born parents.**
- **According to 2017 estimates, 34% of Kern County grandparents were responsible for the care of grandchildren under 18.**



**Child Population by Race/Ethnicity
Kern County, 2018**



**Percent in Population Change in Kern:
2010 to 2019
8.95%**

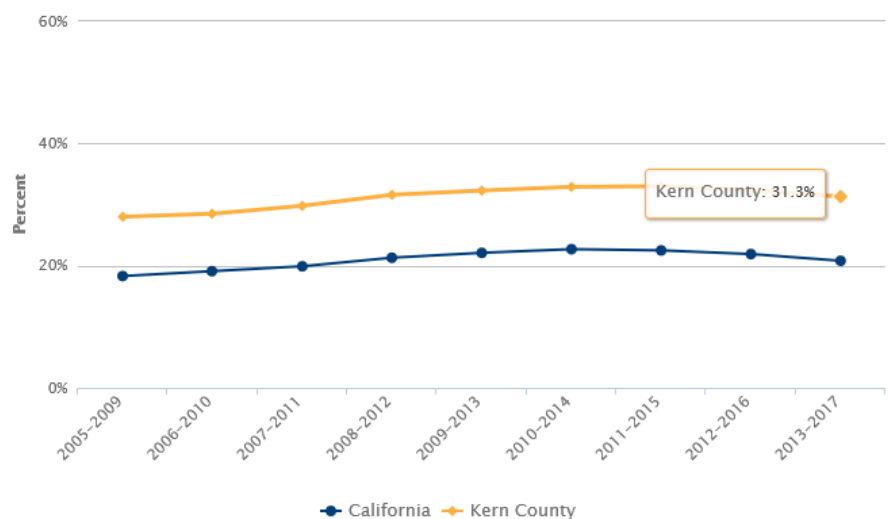


Children Live in Economically-Secure Families

Kern County has made some improvements in reducing rates of unemployment and poverty in recent years. However, too many Kern County families raising children struggle to earn the income needed to support basic family and personal needs. Poverty is a powerful factor in child development and a child's likelihood of living in poverty varies by age, race/ethnicity, and family structure.

- **Kern County's average annual unemployment rate decreased last year but remains above pre-recession levels.** Kern County's average annual unemployment decreased slightly from 8.4% in June 2018 to 8% in June 2019. Kern's 2018 unemployment rate is slightly lower than the County's 8.2% rate before the Great Recession.
- **Median family income in Kern County rose in 2017, but remains far below the state level.** The median income of Kern County families raising children increased to \$50,826 in 2017, but was 32% less than the state (\$67,169). Median family income varies by family structure.
- **One out of every four Kern families were poor, with single-mother families the most vulnerable.** In 2017, 34.6% of Kern County families were raising their children with incomes below the poverty line, compared to 21.2% in California.
- **Nearly one in three Kern children lived in poverty during 2017; 1.5 times higher than the State average.** An estimated 75,599 children in Kern County lived below the poverty line during 2017, a rate of 30%. By comparison, California's 2017 child poverty rate was at 18.2%.
- **More than one out of every three Kern County children lived in households on Federal Aid Programs.** During 2016, 35% of Kern County children live in households with Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash public assistance income, or Food Stamp/SNAP benefits, compared to 25% of California children.
- **More than half of Kern County renters were cost burdened.** In 2017, 40% of renters spent 30% or more of their income on housing costs in Kern County. According to 2017 estimates, Kern renters must earn \$17.88/ hour working a 40-hour week to afford a two-bedroom apartment. A minimum wage worker in Kern County must work 60 hours per week to afford rent for a two bedroom rental unit.
- **More than 131,852 Kern County students were eligible for free or reduced price meals at their schools.** During the 2018-19 school year, an average of 74.8% of students across all school districts participated in their school's free/reduced meal program. Kern had the 9th highest percentage of student eligible for this food assistance program among California counties during 2015.

Source: American Community Survey December 2018
Definition: Income Level for Children Relative to Poverty (Kern County 2013-2017 31.3%)

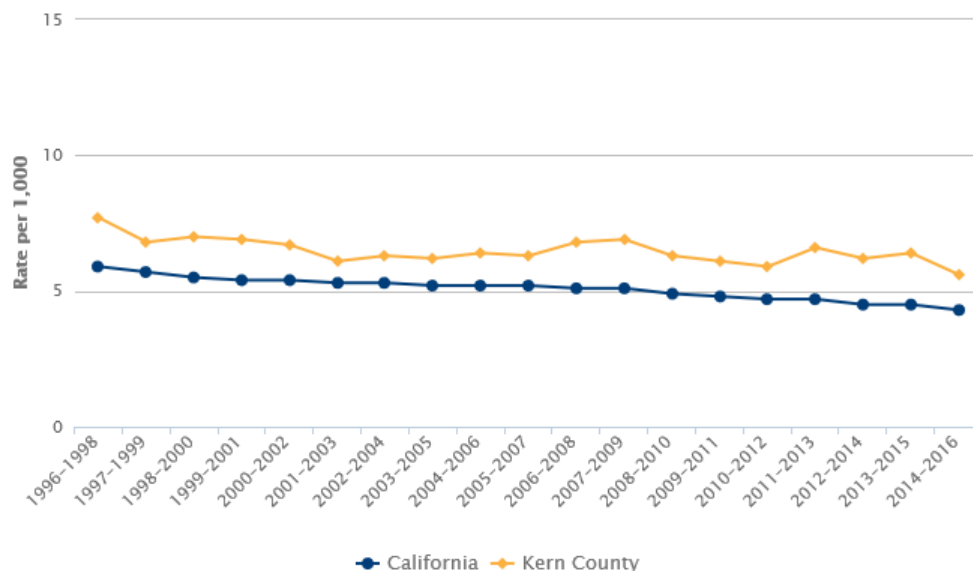


Children Have Healthy Beginnings

Children's health status is a valuable indicator of a community's overall well-being. Even before birth, the health status of a child can have long term consequences on his or her growth, safety and development.

- **More Kern County women received prenatal care in the first trimester.** The percentage of Kern County women receiving prenatal care in their first trimester increased slightly from the three year average 76.8% in 2014-16 to 97% in 2017-18. By comparison, California's 2016 rate was 85%.
- **A higher rate of babies were born with a low birth weight.** The percent of Kern County babies born with a low birth weight increased slightly from a three year average of 7.3% of all live births in 2014-16 to 7.5% in 2015-17. This important infant health indicator for Kern County was higher than California's overall average which was 6.9%.
- **Kern's three year average infant mortality rate decreased from the previous year average.** Kern's three-year (2014-16) average infant mortality rate decreased slightly to 5.6 infants per 1,000 live births from the 2013-15 average of 6.8. Kern's rate was higher than California's overall rate of 4.3 infants per 1,000 live births.
- **Sleep environment can mean life or death for Kern County infants.** In 2017, the Kern County Child Death Review Team reported there were 2 infant deaths that were linked to an unsafe sleeping environment.
- **The percentage of Kern kindergartners receiving all required immunizations continues to remain in line with California's rate.** In 2019, 91.1% of Kern County kindergartners entered school with all required immunizations. The California average is 94.8%.
- **9 out of every 10 Kern children had health insurance.** In 2016, 97.7% of Kern's children under age 18 had health insurance, a figure higher than the State rate of 97.1%.
- **Just 25% of Kern County students in grade seven met all fitness standards of physical fitness in the "Healthy Fitness Zone" in school year 2017-2018.** This represents levels of fitness that offer protection against diseases resulting from sedentary living.

Infant Mortality Rate: 1996-1998 to 2013-2015



Source: American Community Survey December 2018

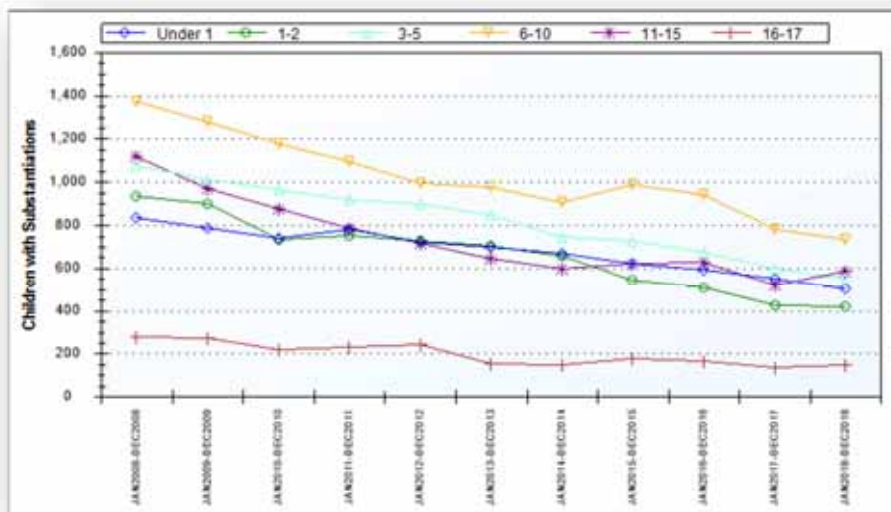
Definition: Number of deaths among children under age 1 per 1,000 live births (e.g., in 2014-16, there were 4.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in California).

Children Live in Safe and Stable Families

Safety is a critical part of a child's healthy growth and development. Children who grow up in safe and stable homes are more likely to be healthy, successful in school, and successful in life. Children who face challenges in their home environments such as abuse, neglect, and family violence are more likely to leave school early, become part of the criminal justice system, and in need of public assistance as adults.

- **During 2018, 41 children each day were referred to CPS with allegations of child abuse and neglect in Kern County.** Kern County recorded allegations of abuse and neglect for 14,914 children in 2018, a rate of 58.4 children per 1,000 children, compared to California's rate of 52.9 children.
- **In 2018, an average of 8 Kern County children were victims of maltreatment each day.** In 2018, 2,934 children, 11.5 per 1,000, ages 0-17, were victims of abuse or neglect in Kern County. Kern's substantiated child maltreatment rate fell from 13.8 per 1,000 children in 2016, to 11.5 in 2018. Despite its sustained improvement, Kern's substantiated child abuse/neglect rate remains well above the California's rate of 7.5 per 1,000 children.
- **As in prior years, neglect is still the most common form of maltreatment in Kern County. Among substantiated victims, 76% were neglected - meaning a caretaker failed to provide for the child's basic needs, 7% were physically abused, 5% were sexually abused, and 3% emotional abuse and caretaker absence or incapacity, respectively.** The remaining percentage includes a child being at risk or having had a sibling who was abused.
- **Children of all ages experience abuse and neglect, but the youngest children are the most vulnerable.** In 2018, 501 infants were the victims of child abuse or neglect in Kern County, a rate of 36.8 per 1,000 infants. When compared to other race/ethnic groups, Caucasian children experienced the highest rate of child maltreatment in Kern County with 29.2 per 1,000 African-American children.
- **The highest rate of fatal child abuse/neglect continue to be among the youngest children in Kern County.** In 2018, there were 6 child fatalities due to abuse or neglect of which were determined by law enforcement or the Coroner; 1 near fatality and 19 severe/serious injuries due to abuse or neglect.
- **The rate of Kern County children entering foster care due to abuse or neglect decreased from previous year.** During 2018, 864 children were removed from their family home and placed in an out-of-home placement in order to ensure child safety. The rate of children entering foster care was 3.4 per 1,000 children in 2018, no change from the same rate in 2017 of 3.4 per 1,000.
- **Number of Kern County children and youth living in foster care decreased in 2018.** The number of children and youth in foster care decreased from 1,602 in 2017 to 1,467 in 2018 or 5.7 per 1,000.

- **Fewer Kern children who exited the Kern County foster care system re-enter into foster care after a year.** Of all Kern County children exited from foster care during 2018, 89.2% did not re-enter foster care 12 months from the date of the earliest discharge to reunification or guardianship, compared to 88.7% statewide.



Kern County Child Maltreatment Substantiations 2008-2018 by age group

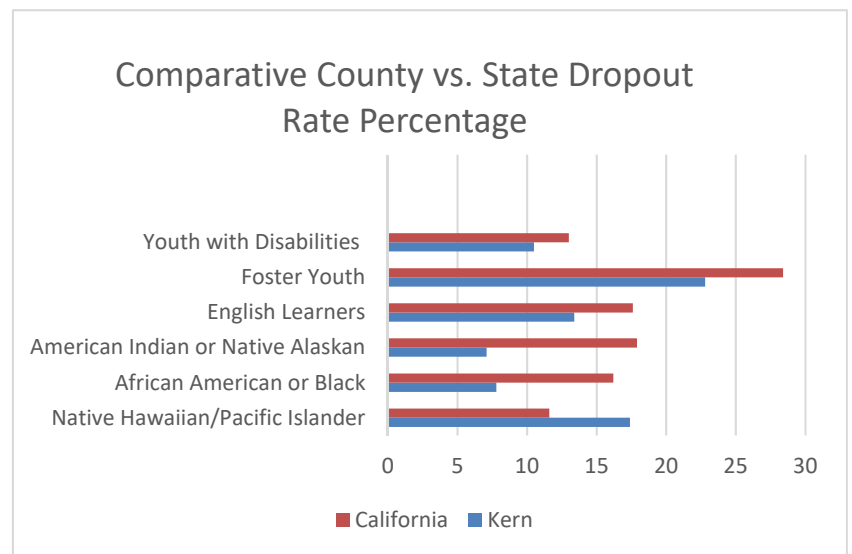
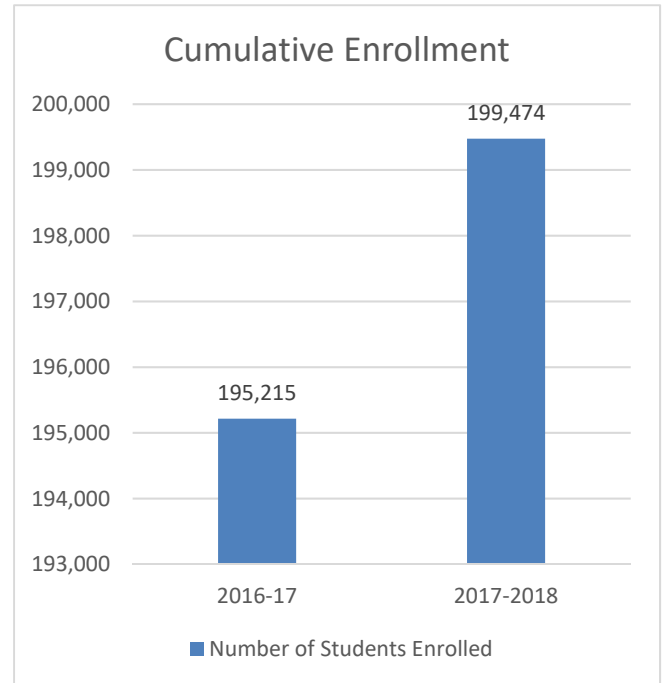
Source:
cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb/childwelfare

Students Succeed in School

Education is one of the best opportunities a community has to positively impact a child's life into adulthood. Most educational achievement indicators are closely linked with college readiness and economic advancement. Education indicators for Kern County students have improved, however, certain segments of the county's student population excel while others struggle.

- **Kern's K-12 public school enrollment hit an all-time high during the 2017-18 academic year.** Public school enrollment countywide was 199,474 students in the 2017-18 school year. The County's 264 public schools enrolled 4,259 more students than the previous year's count.
- **Nearly three-fourths of Kern's K-12 public school enrollment were considered economically disadvantaged.** During the 2017-18 school year, 74% of Kern students were considered economically disadvantaged. These students showed lower rates of academic performance and graduation.
- **Kern County California Assessment of Student Performance & Progress Scores dip.** Across all grades, 49% of Kern County students in 2017, compared to 51% in 2016, met or exceeded the English language arts/literacy standard and 22% met or exceeded the mathematics standard compared to California's overall rates of 50% and 39%, respectively. As with past standardized tests, sharp differences emerged in county scores of students from low-income families, English learners, Special Education students, and African-American and Latino students compared to other students.
- **Despite improvement, some student populations continue to experience above average dropout rates.** Kern County students with the highest dropout rates included foster youth students 22.3%, students with disabilities 10.5%, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 17.4%, English Learner students 13.4%, and Migrant 9.7%.
- **Kern County high school graduates meeting entrance requirements for UC/CSU systems increases.** In the 2017-18 school year, the number of students graduating with all "A-G" classes completed increased 0.5 percent from 2016-17 with a total of 3,273 students completing the requirements for UC/CSU admission.

Source: California Department of Education



For more information go to: