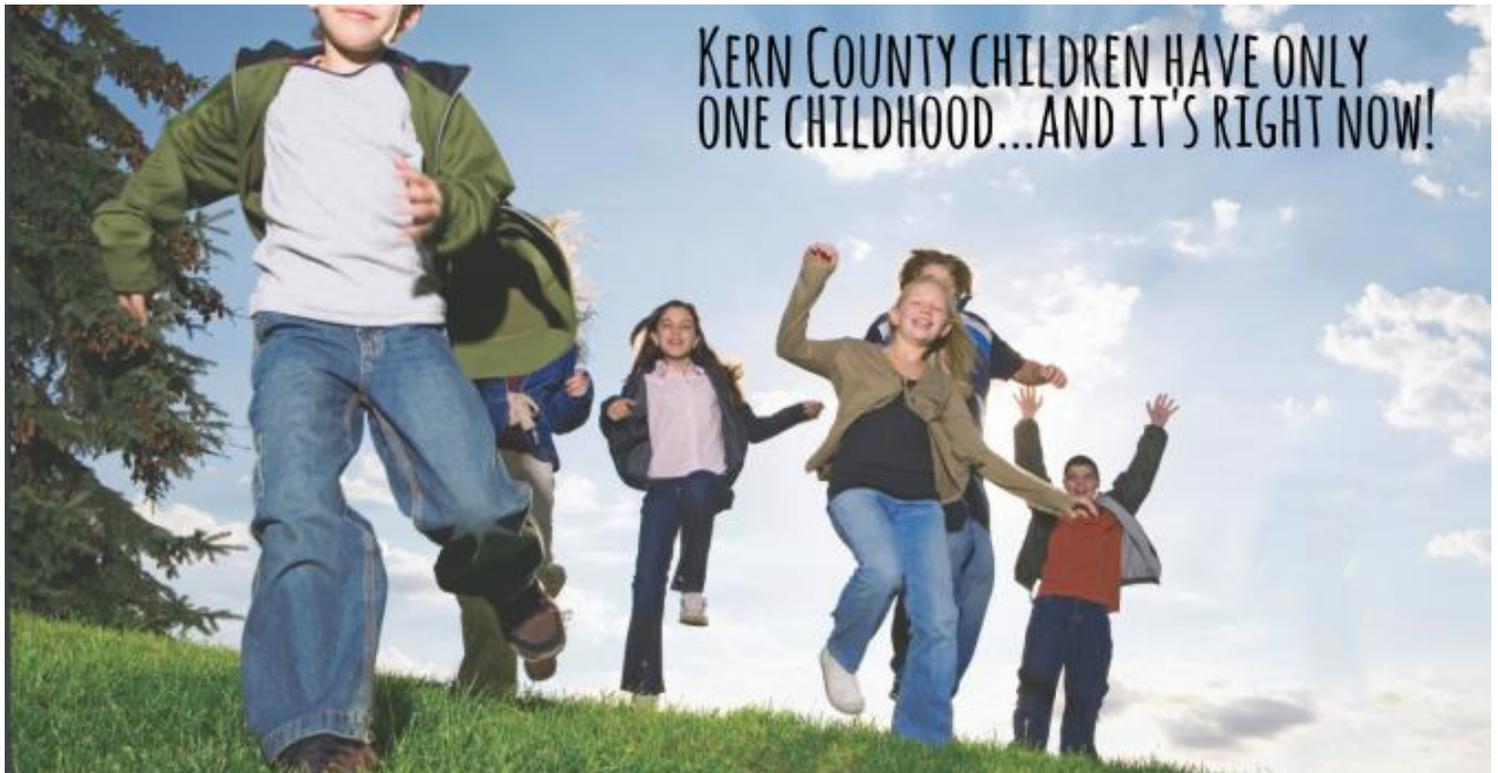




Kern County Network for Children

Our Children. Our Community.

Important Facts About Kern's Children 2021



For More Information Go To:

kidsdata.org

A Program of  Lucile Packard Foundation
for Children's Health

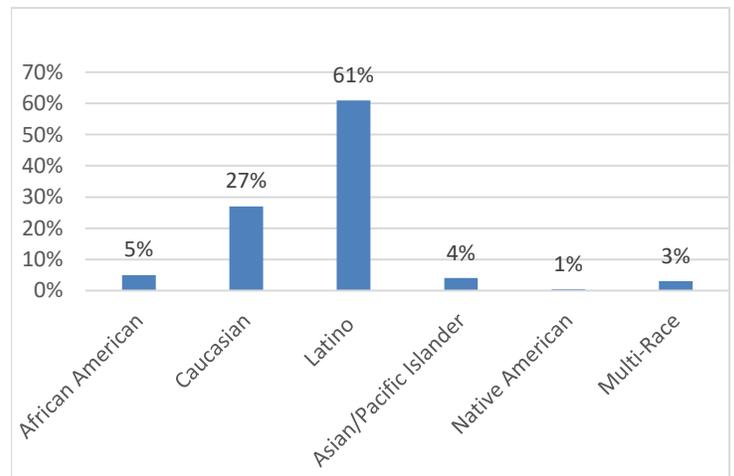
Kern County Children & Families

Tracking child population helps project a community's potential needs for education, childcare, 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 2020 was 253,010. Children represented 28.8% of the county population. 31% of Kern County children were under the age of six.
- **Latino children made up the largest racial/ethnic group among Kern's child population.** In 2020, 61% of Kern County children were Latino and 27% were Caucasian. According to 2020 population data, 5% of Kern's children were African American, 4% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% were multi-cultural and less than 0.5% 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 2020, 35,301 (22% 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 59% and 27% of children are in households were single mothers raising children and nearly 10 percent were being raised by single fathers.
- **U.S. Census Bureau four-year estimates showed that from 2016, 43% of Kern County children ages 0-17 lived with one or more foreign-born parents.**
- **According to 2017 estimates, 4% of Kern County grandparents were responsible for the care of grandchildren under 18.**



Child Population by Race/Ethnicity Kern County, 2020 Census.gov



**Percent in Child Population Change in
Kern:
2019-2020
.08% Increase**

Children Live in Economically-Secure Families

Prior to the pandemic, Kern County had made some improvements in reducing rates of unemployment and poverty in recent years. 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. The pandemic, within a few months, more than doubled previous years unemployment rates, creating increased stress to Kern families.

- **Kern County's average annual unemployment rate decreased in 2019, but increased substantially in 2020 due to Covid-19.** Kern County's average annual unemployment again decreased substantially from 17.5% in June 2020 to 10.1% in May 2021, according to the California Employment Development Department.
- **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 \$48,878 in 2017, but was 36% less than the state (\$76,912). 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, 29.3% of Kern County families were raising their children with incomes below the poverty line, compared to 17.6% in California.
- **Nearly one in three Kern children lived in poverty during 2017; 1.5 times higher than the State average.** An estimated 29.8 percent of children in Kern County lived below the poverty line during 2017. By comparison, California's 2017 child poverty rate was at 18.1%.
- **Nearly 20% of families receive assistance to combat food insecurity.** During 2018, 153,262 Kern County residents live in households with CalFresh (food stamp) participation and 44,268 mothers participated in Women, Infants and Children (WIC) services.
- **More than half of Kern County renters were cost burdened.** In 2018, 40% of renters spent 30% or more of their income on housing costs in Kern County. According to 2020 estimates, Kern renters must earn \$16.37/ hour working a 40-hour week to afford a two-bedroom apartment. A minimum wage worker in Kern County must nearly 50 hours per week to afford rent for a two bedroom rental unit.
- **More than 141,041 Kern County students were eligible for free or reduced price meals at their schools.** During the 2020 school year, an average of 72.6% of students across all school districts participated in their school's free/reduced meal program, compared the state average of 59.2%.

Source: American Community Survey December 2018

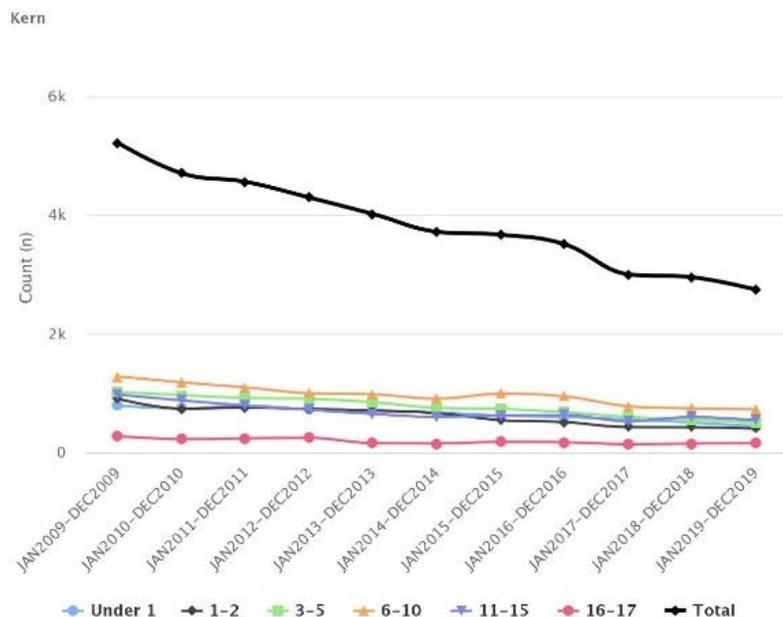
Definition: Income Level for Children Relative to Poverty (Kern County 2013-2017 31.3%)



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 2020, 37 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 13,425 children in 2020, a rate of 53.1 children per 1,000 children, compared to California's rate of 43.4 children.
- **In 2019, an average of 7.3 Kern County children were victims of maltreatment each day.** In 2020, 2,691 children, 10.6 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 10.6 in 2020. Despite its sustained improvement, Kern's substantiated child abuse/neglect rate remains above the California's rate of 6.8 per 1,000 children.
- **As in prior years, neglect is still the most common form of maltreatment in Kern County. Among substantiated victims in 2018,** 88% were neglected - meaning a caretaker failed to provide for the child's basic needs, 3% were physically abused, 2% were sexually abused, and 0.1% emotional abuse and 4% experienced caretaker absence or incapacity. 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 2020, 468 infants were the victims of child abuse or neglect in Kern County, a rate of 36 per 1,000 infants. When compared to other race/ethnic groups, African American children experienced the highest rate of child maltreatment in Kern County with 24.3 per 1,000.
- **The highest rate of fatal child abuse/neglect continue to be among the youngest children in Kern County.** In 2020, there were 5 child fatalities due to abuse or neglect of which were determined by law enforcement or the Coroner.
- **The rate of Kern County children entering foster care due to abuse or neglect increased from previous year.** During 2020, 953 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 3.8 per 1,000 children in 2020, more than the 2019 rate of 3.4 per 1,000.
- **Number of Kern County children and youth living in foster care decreased in 2020.** The number of children and youth in foster care decreased from 1,453 in 2019 to 1,540 in 2020 or 6.1 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 2019, 90.8% did not re-enter foster care 12 months from the date of the earliest discharge to reunification or guardianship, compared to 89.6% statewide.



Kern County Child Maltreatment Substantiations 2011-2020 by age group.

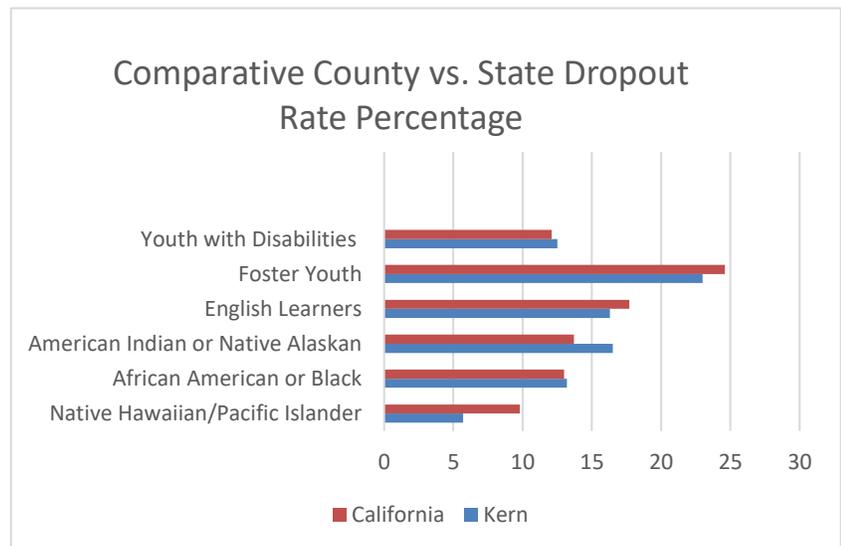
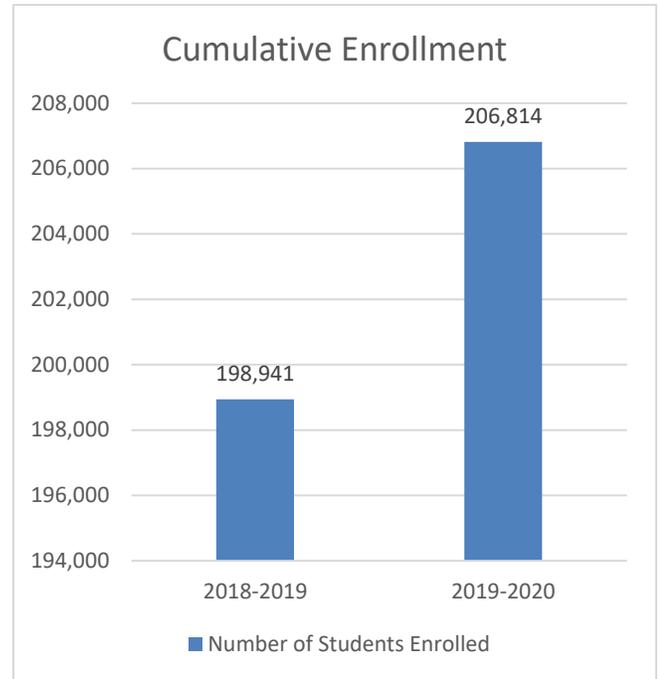
Source: cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb/childwelfare

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 increased during the 2019-20 academic year.** Public school enrollment countywide was 206,814 students in the 2019-20 school year. The County's 264 public schools enrolled 7,873 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 2019-20 school year, 72.6% of Kern students were considered economically disadvantaged.
- **Kern County California Assessment of Student Performance & Progress Scores dip.** Across all grades, 43% of Kern County students in 2018-19, compared to 42% in 2017-18, met or exceeded the English language arts/literacy standard and 29% met or exceeded the mathematics standard compared to California's overall rates of 51% and 40%, 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 23% students with disabilities 12.5%, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 5.7%, English Learner students 16.3%, and Migrant 7.5%.
- **Kern County high school graduates meeting entrance requirements for UC/CSU systems increases.** In the 2018-19 school year, the number of students graduating with all "A-G" classes completed increased 1.1 percent from 2017-18 with a total of 5,019 students completing the requirements for UC/CSU admission.

Source: California Department of Education



For more information go to:

kidsdata.org

A Program of  Lucile Packard Foundation
for Children's Health