

REPORT CARD 2009

KERN COUNTY NETWORK FOR CHILDREN

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The mission of the Kern County Network for Children is to protect and enrich the lives of children in Kern County through the commitment of all community partners by helping to build and sustain healthy families.

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WELCOME

The Kern County Network for Children is pleased to present Report Card 2009. The report is both sobering and inspiring. Sobering because Kern County continues to struggle in key measurements of child well being, trailing State and national averages in nearly every area, including health, safety, education and poverty. Children are suffering here and we all should be concerned.

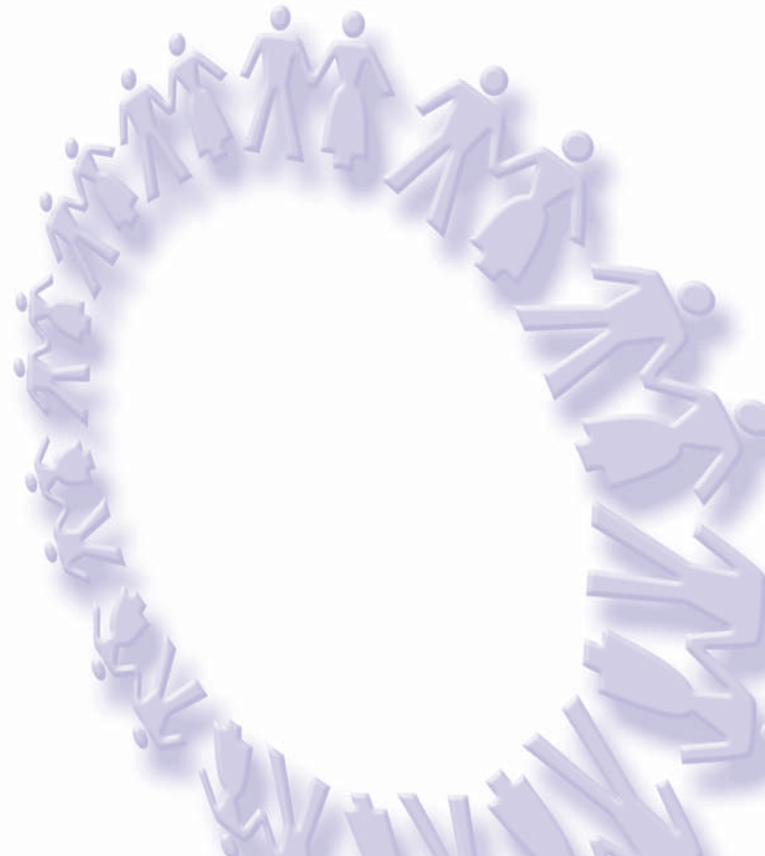
But there is hope found in this report. In some areas, we can see progress being made, including a decline in child poverty, improved test scores and a reduction in foster care rates. We also can find inspiration in the success of new collaborative efforts designed to make real progress in improving child well being. Examples of this found in the Report Card include Differential Response, the Early Intervention Program and the Dream Center. None would be possible without the Network for Children.

We are in challenging economic times that are adversely impacting families throughout our community and also threatening the funding for some of the successful programs mentioned in this report. Our hope is this Report Card will inspire all community partners to turn this challenge into an opportunity to innovate and develop new partnerships that will make real progress in improving the lives of children in Kern County.

Sincerely,



Stephen M. Pelz,
KCNC Governing Board President



*“If we wish to create a lasting peace
we must begin with the children.”*

- Mahatma Gandhi



In 2007, the Census Bureau estimated 237,000 children under age 18 lived in Kern County, or 30 percent of the total population. This represents a 39 percent increase since 1990.

-- American Community Survey 2007



COUNTY OVERVIEW

Kern County, California

Kern County is the state's third-largest county in land area, covering 8,170 square miles with three distinct physical environments: valley, mountain, and desert. Its 11 incorporated cities and 41 unincorporated communities were home to an estimated 823,550 residents on July 1, 2008.

According to the California Department of Finance, Kern was the fifth fastest-growing county in California based on its one-year percentage growth of 1.84 percent. Statewide, California's population increased 1.16 percent.

Between July 2007 and July 2008, Kern grew by 14,850 individuals. Natural increase (births minus deaths) contributed 10,045 individuals (89%) and net migration (domestic migration plus foreign immigration) contributed 1,193 individuals (11%).

The chart below provides a breakdown of population by children's age and ethnicity. This information is taken from the California Department of Finance's most recent population projections, which include a base population from the 2000 Census and additional data based on birth/death rates, school enrollment, migration

patterns, and other factors. Population figures reported elsewhere in this document may differ slightly, as they are based on the US Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey.

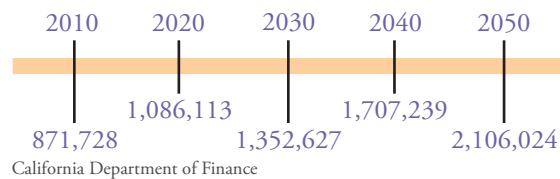
Kern County is one of eight counties to have gained over 150,000 people in the last eight years. Department of Finance projections released in 2007 estimate Kern's population to grow to near 1.1 million by 2020 and 1.7 million by 2040.



Kern County became home for 14,850 new residents between July 1, 2007 and July 1, 2008. This population growth makes Kern County the fifth fastest growing county in the state.

-- California Department of Finance

**Kern County Population Projections
2010-2050**



DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Finance
<http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/estimates/e-z/2000-08>

<http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/DEMOGRAP/ReportsPapers/Projections/P3/documents/KERN.XLS>

Kern County Child Population by Ethnicity & Age (2008)	African American	Caucasian	Latino	Asian/Pac Islander	Native American	Other	Total
Total Children (0-17)	13,461	86,992	136,742	7,969	1,442	5,535	252,141
Percentage of Total Children	5.3%	34.5%	54.2%	3.2%	0.6%	2.2%	100.0%
Under 1	810	5,212	9,267	481	67	192	16,029
1-2	1,561	10,156	17,813	962	134	359	30,985
3-5	2,062	12,515	23,690	1,111	70	1,763	41,211
6-10	3,358	22,049	35,223	1,979	329	1,734	64,672
11-15	3,960	25,880	36,197	2,406	571	1,035	70,049
16-17	1,710	11,180	14,552	1,030	271	452	29,195

FAMILY ECONOMICS

Households Raising Children

According to the American Community Survey, 104,876 or 44 percent of Kern County households were families raising children below the age of 18 years in 2007, compared to 35 percent across the state.

In 2007, the percent of families with children headed by married-couples was 68 percent. The majority of single parent households in Kern County were headed by mothers. The rate of single mother households has dropped from 78 percent of total single parent households in 2002 to 68 percent in 2007. In Kern County, 46,385 children or 23 percent of the child population were being raised by single mothers compared to 27 percent during 2006. Statewide, the 2007 rate was 20 percent of California children.

Grandparents are increasing their roles as primary caregivers of Kern County children. In 2007, 9,319 or 4 percent of the children under 18 years of age were cared for by their grandparents compared to 3 percent during 2006. Statewide, the 2007 rate was 3 percent of California children.

The percentage of children being raised by immigrant parents is decreasing in Kern County. In 2007, 96,956 or 43 percent of the children less than 18 years of age lived with either one or both parents who were foreign born compared to 44 percent during the previous year. Statewide, the 2007 rate was 51 percent of California children.

Income

The Census Bureau reports Kern County's median income for families with children was \$44,469 during 2007. By comparison, median income for families with children in California was \$62,040 and in the nation, \$58,686 during the same year. Kern County's median family income is 28.3 percent less than the state and 24.2 percent less than the nation.

Per Capita Income

The per capita income figure is often used to measure the economic health of counties and other regions. It is calculated by dividing an area's total income by the number of residents.

According to the 2007 Survey, the Kern County per capita income was \$19,921. By comparison, the per capita income in California was \$28,678 and in the nation was \$26,668 during the same year. Using the Census measure, Kern County's per capita income is 30.5 percent less than the state and 25.3 percent less than the nation.



In Kern County, 8,723 grandparents were responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren that live with them and over half have cared for the children for at least five years. Forty-five percent of these grandparent-caregivers were not in the labor force.

-- American Community Survey 2007

Unemployment

In Kern County, an annual average labor force of 363,700 was available for work during 2008. Of these, 328,000 (or 90%) were working and 35,700 were seeking employment. Thirteen percent of Kern County children had no parents in the labor force in 2007 compared to nine percent of children state-wide.

The annual average unemployment rate for Kern County was 9.8 percent during 2008. By comparison, California's annual average rate of unemployment was 7.2 percent. Unemployment rates fluctuate throughout the year, especially in regions with seasonal economies like agriculture. In 2008, the county's highest monthly unemployment rates (11.8% and 10.7%) occurred during December and March, respectively.

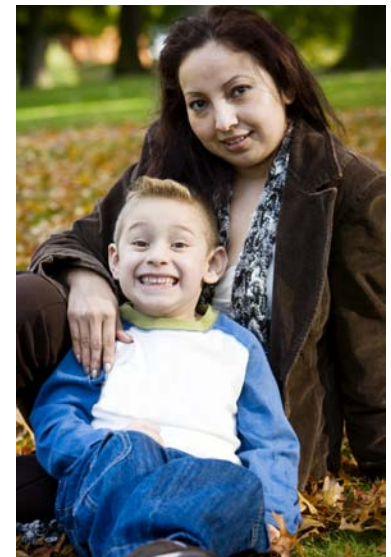
Outlying communities often have higher unemployment rates than Metro Bakersfield (6.8%). The following communities had some of the highest unemployment rates in the County during 2008. Arvin (26.6%), Delano (25.9%), and McFarland (20.7%) exceeded an unemployment rate of 20 percent during 2008.

DATA SOURCES:

US Bureau of Economic Analysis
<http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis>

American Community Survey
<http://factfinder.census.gov>

California Employment Development Department
<http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/>



In Kern County in 2007, the poverty rates for families headed by single females ranged from 48% for women with less than a high school diploma to 1% for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

-- American Community Survey 2007

Children in Poverty (0-17)	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	28.8%	29.0%	24.7%
California	18.2%	17.7%	16.9%

Children in Poverty (0-4)	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	31.6%	32.6%	28.8%
California	19.6%	19.2%	18.7%

All Families with Children Percent Living in Poverty	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	25.9%	23.9%	21.2%
California	14.9%	14.3%	13.7%

Children in Poverty (5-17)	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	27.8%	27.6%	23.0%
California	17.7%	17.2%	16.1%

Single Moms with Children Percent Living in Poverty	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	49.8%	48.7%	40.8%
California	32.6%	31.7%	31.8%

Hourly Wage Needed to Afford Two-Bedroom Apt.	2007	2008	2009
Kern County	\$12.42	\$13.06	\$14.15
California	\$22.86	\$23.83	na

Poverty

According to the American Community Survey conducted by the US Census Bureau, 237,020 children lived in Kern County during 2007. About one out of every four children lived below the poverty line (24.7%). By comparison, 16.9 percent of children statewide were living in poverty. Kern County's child poverty rate has decreased from the previous year's 29.0 percent and represents the lowest rate of the decade.

In 16.1 percent of Kern County's families living in poverty, the householder worked full-time and year-round.

Very young children are especially vulnerable to the effects of poverty. Of the 58,429 Kern County children living in poverty, 28.8 percent of these children were under five years of age. In both the county and state, this figure has declined from the previous year and marks an all time decade low.

The percent of Kern County children living in poverty varies by race and ethnicity. African-American (42.7%) and Latino (29.9%) children had the highest poverty rates. By comparison, 28.3 percent of African-American children and 23.6 percent of Latino children statewide were living in poverty. Among Kern County's very young children, African-American children under the age of five years had the highest rate, with 67.3 percent living in poverty.

Among all Kern County families raising children, 21.2 percent were impoverished in 2007. Single-parent families were most likely to be poor. In 2007, 36.8 percent of the families raising children that lived in poverty were single-parent families compared to 12.1 percent among married –couple families. Families headed by single mothers were the poorest with 40.8 percent living in poverty.

Educational attainment is an important factor in rates of poverty. Among families whose householder had less than a high school diploma, 28.7 percent lived in poverty in 2007. Of those

families whose householder had a high school diploma, the rate of poverty dropped to 15.5 percent. For those families with householders having at least a bachelor's degree, the poverty rate fell dramatically to 3.2 percent.

Child Support

During Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007-08, Kern County Department of Child Support Services served 62,205 children represented by 54,196 open support cases. Eighty percent of these open support cases had a formal support order established for the custodial parent by the court system.

Of the \$71.6 million owed to Kern County children from non-custodial parents, \$38.5 million (51.9%) was collected and distributed as current support.

The percentage collected and distributed during FFY 2007-08 is significantly higher than FFY 2002-03 when only 41.0 percent of owed child support was collected and distributed.

DATA SOURCES:

2007 American Community Survey
<http://factfinder.census.gov>

US Department of Health and Human Services
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/09poverty.shtml>

California Department of Social Services
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/research/default.htm>

Kern County Department of Child Support Services
<http://www.co.kern.ca.us/childsupport>

Housing

Families paying more than 30 percent of their gross income for housing are cost burdened and often have difficulty meeting other important financial obligations.

The Census Bureau's 2007 American Community Survey reports 91,840 renting households in Kern County, or 38 percent of the 239,662 total households. Over half of Kern's renter-occupied



In 2007, African-American children, who comprised 5.5 percent of Kern's total child population, were the most likely to be poor with 43 percent living in families below the poverty line. The figure jumps to 67 percent for African-American children under the age of five years.

-- American Community Survey 2007



housing had children under 18 years (53%) and about one-third had young children under 6 years (31%).

Of these renting households, 49 percent spent 30 percent or more of household income on rent. Kern County's median gross rent during 2007 was \$758, a 46 percent increase over the 2000 median gross rent of \$518.

Fair Market Rents are determined annually by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and can differ substantially from the median gross rent reported by the Census Bureau. The current Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Kern County is \$736.

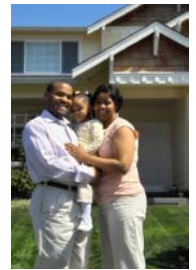
Using this rental rate, the National Low Income Housing Coalition calculates a housing wage, or the amount a household must earn to afford a two-bedroom unit. During 2009, the monthly housing wage is \$2,453; the full-time hourly housing wage is \$14.15. Kern County's housing wage represents 177 percent of the minimum wage.

DATA SOURCES:

2007 American Community Survey
<http://factfinder.census.gov>

HUD User
<http://www.huduser.org>

National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)
<http://www.nlihc.org/>



A renter in Kern County earning minimum wage must work 71 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom rental unit at Fair Market Rent.

Community In Action

- Kern County 2009 Homeless Census



Sponsored by the Kern County Homeless Collaborative, the 2009 Homeless Census began on the night of January 21, 2009 when all those staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing were counted. During the day on January 22, more than 140 volunteers were sent throughout Bakersfield and Kern County's outlying communities to identify and count the unsheltered homeless.

The preliminary results of the census indicate that the total homeless population is down slightly from 2007 Homeless Census, but more are living without shelter. The January survey counted 1,472 unduplicated homeless individuals within Kern County. This total included 1,317 in Metro Bakersfield and 155 people in the rural areas. Of those counted:

- 1,242 were single or unaccompanied adults.
- 230 were members of 76 separate families with children, including 81 adults or caretakers and 149 children.
- 664 people (45%) had shelter on the night of January 21, while 808 people (55%) had no shelter.
- In rural areas, only 19 people had shelter on the night of January 21.
- 12 families, including 18 adults and 19 children had no shelter on the night of January 21 and were living in automobiles, abandoned buildings or campgrounds.

While the total count was down slightly from the 2007 census, there was a large increase in the number of unsheltered homeless. This increase correlates to the number of shelter and transitional housing beds lost over the last two years. Additionally, weather likely played a role in the lower count as it rained on both January 21 and 22.

Data from the 2009 census will be used to secure funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Kern County agencies working with the homeless. Results will also be used for the Homeless Collaborative in the 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness to improve services and work toward the ultimate elimination of chronic homelessness.

-- Jim Wheeler, United Way of Kern County

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION



There is a well-established consensus among early childhood professionals that play is an essential element of developmentally appropriate, high quality early education programs.

-- Alliance for Childhood

Quality Child Care & Early Education

Current research in brain development supports what parents and early childhood educators have long recognized that the first years of life are critical to a child's development. Brain growth and learning are extraordinarily rapid during a child's early years and early experiences can have a long lasting impact on how children develop and their ability to learn. Quality child care and early education has been linked to improved language, academic skills and social development when children enter school.

While studies show that good quality child care can help children's development, they also demonstrate that children in poor quality child care are delayed in language and reading skills, and display more aggression toward other children and adults. Additionally, child care and early education support the family in its child rearing role and serves as a vital part of the local economy by enabling parents to enter and remain in the workforce, improving workforce productivity and reducing employee absenteeism.

Supply & Demand

Using 2008 Department of Finance population estimates, nearly 117,000 children under the age of 14 years in Kern County (60% of the 0-13 population) are in need of some kind of care—whether for part or all of the day—while their parents work.

There is a wide selection of child care and early education programs available to Kern County families. A total of 1,035 licensed family child care providers and 202 licensed child care centers/half-day child development programs are located throughout Kern County. There are also 151 programs with a capacity to serve 15,160 school-age children before and after school. Combined, these providers and programs have the capacity to serve 34 percent of Kern's estimated child care need.*

In recent years, access to child care has become an essential work support for families as more working mothers contribute to household incomes. According to the American Community Survey, 14,754 Kern County women gave birth within 12 months immediately preceding the 2007 study; 51 percent of these new mothers were in the labor force prior to the birth of their child. The overall labor force participation rates of mothers with children under 18 was 65 percent in 2007 and 30 percent for mothers with children under 6 years of age. Moreover, 24 percent of all Kern County families with children under 18 in 2007 were headed by a single mother and the majority of these mothers were in the labor force (75%).

**Footnote: Kern County's reported capacity does not include license-exempt care provided by relatives, friends, neighbors, and nannies. This type of care is not required to meet the State's child care licensing requirements and the extent to which families choose license-exempt care is unknown.*

Cost of Early Care & Education

Quality child care is unaffordable for many Kern County families. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that parents should not spend more than 10 percent of their family income on child care. However, to purchase child care for an infant and a four-year old in a Kern County child care center, a family would have to spend 36 percent of their median annual income for child care.

Infant/toddler care has become increasingly expensive and difficult to find in Kern County. Currently, the average annual cost of full-time care for an infant or toddler in a Kern County center is \$9,410. In a family child care home, a year of care for an infant or toddler averages \$5,994. The cost of care for a preschooler is \$6,375 for a licensed center and \$5,441 in a family child care home. In addition, the high cost of housing means that Kern County families have less to spend on other necessities such as child care which may limit the number of choices in the quality of care their children receive.

Each California county has a Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) to expand low-income families' access to all of the area's subsidized child care and development



Finding licensed child care for the youngest children continues to be a challenge in Kern County. Only 9 percent of slots set aside in licensed child care centers are for infants and toddlers.

-- Community Connection for Child Care

Kern County Child Care Supply By Provider/Setting & Spaces (March, 2009)	Number of Providers/Settings	Percentage of Total Providers/Settings	Number of Spaces	Percentage of Total Spaces	Average Number of Spaces Per Provider/Setting
Family Child Care Homes	1,035	74.6%	10,200	26%	9.9
Licensed Child Care Centers/ Half-Day Enrichment Programs	202	14.5%	13,932	35.4%	69.0
License-Exempt Programs (School-Age: 6 years and up)	151	10.9%	15,160	38.6%	100.4
Total*	1,388	100%	39,292	100%	28.3

programs. CEL data is a valuable tool to more accurately address regional demand for subsidized care and strategically plan for funding needs. In the fall of 2008, there were 5,219 families with 7,910 children waiting to enroll in subsidized child care or child development programs through the Kern County CEL. The majority of these families need financial assistance with child care in order to work (76%) and 74 percent of the children required full time care. Unfortunately, limited funding offers very few subsidized slots to meet this need, and even fewer opportunities for children under two years of age.

Kern County Child Care Center Survey

The Early Childhood Council of Kern is dedicated to improving the quality of the early childhood workforce and improving the working conditions within the field thereby improving outcomes for our young children. In the summer of 2008 the Council conducted a countywide, child development center survey to better understand the working conditions within the early care and education field. Information collected included salaries, turnover rates, benefits, educational levels of staff as well as general demographic information about staff members within subsidized and non-subsidized programs.

For the last several years, there has been a focus on increasing the educational levels of staff within the early childhood field. Research supports the fields belief that a highly trained and educated workforce will result in children being better prepared for school and life. The survey found that nearly half of the surveyed program staff had 13 to 24 Early Childhood Education (ECE) units (44%) and 26 percent had an AA degree or higher degree in ECE. When compared, subsidized centers had slightly higher rates of more educated staff than non-subsidized programs. The positive impact of a quality workforce will have lasting benefits for our community's children.

In the past, the early care and education field has been plagued with high turnover rates among teaching staff, often reaching as high as 40 percent annually statewide. However, recent efforts to decrease turnover rates is having a positive impact locally. Overall, subsidized programs experienced a 19 percent turnover rate compared to a 15 percent turnover rate among non-subsidized programs in Kern County. Although reasons for staff leaving varied, accepting another job either at an elementary school, in another ECE program or unrelated field was most frequently cited for the turnover in the surveyed programs.

Historically, the lack of benefits has also been cited as a primary contributor to the high turnover rates within the early childhood education field. This survey found that the number of employers offering some type of benefits (reduced child care, paid vacation, sick days and holidays and insurance) dropped considerably since the last survey conducted in 2005. In general, subsidized programs were more likely to offer their staff a range of benefits than non-subsidized programs.

Kern County Economic Impact Report

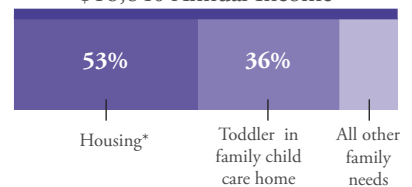
The purpose of the Kern County Child Care Economic Impact Report is to measure the economic impacts of business, organizations and individuals that provide early



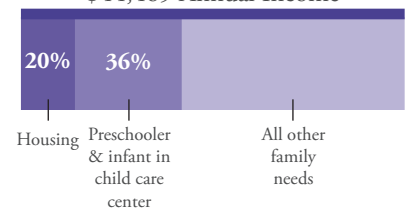
Child care for two children under five years of age will cost Kern county families about the same amount as their mortgage. On average, parents can spend \$1,315 each month for full-time care for an infant and preschooler in licensed child care center.

Child Care & Family Budgets

One minimum wage earner
\$16,640 Annual Income



Median Family Income with Children
\$44,469 Annual Income



*Housing (rent for 2 bedroom unit)

childhood education and child care services to Kern County children under 14 years of age. Economic impacts are measured in terms of employment, spending on child care services, and the role that child care services play in making it possible for Kern County families to earn income.

The local early childhood care and education industry is an essential community service and plays a critical role in Kern County's economic vitality. At the end of 2008, Kern County's early childhood care and education industry served 43,102 children and generated \$233 million annually for the local economy, more than our cattle or alfalfa crops. The industry provided direct employment to 8,691 people, and indirect employment to 5,406 in child care support services. The combined employment of 14,097 is greater than either the construction industry or the workforce at Edwards Air Force Base.

Child care is an expanding infrastructure essential to a growing economy. Since 1997 the Local Investment in Child Care project (Kern LINCC), a partnership between the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office and the Early Childhood Council of Kern, has been working diligently to bring more quality child care to Kern County. Child Care Economic Impact Reports were done in 1997, 2002 and 2008, and show a significant expansion of the industry over the last 11 years. The number of child care spaces increased 139.5 percent from 18,000 spaces in 1997 to 43,102 spaces in 2008. Annual gross receipts measures the size of an industry in terms of the overall value of the goods and services produced by the industry. Since 1997, the child care industry experienced a 316.1 percent growth in annual gross receipts from \$56 million in 1997 to \$233 million in 2008.



Kern County's early education and child care sector provided 14,097 direct and indirect jobs for Kern County residents. This combined employment is greater than either the construction industry or the workforce at Edwards Air Force Base.

-- Kern LINCC

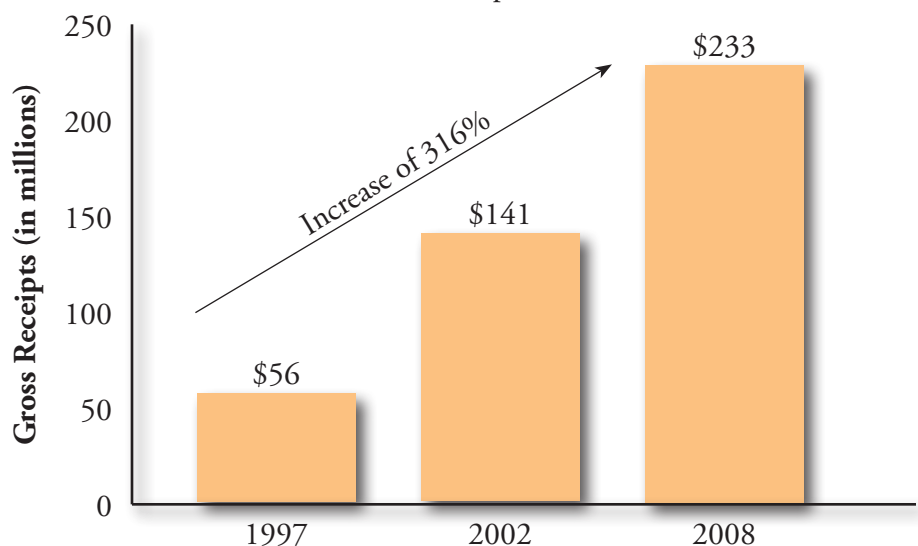
DATA SOURCES:

Community Connection for Child Care
<http://www.kernchildcare.org>

Early Childhood Council of Kern
<http://kcsos.kern.org/kcccc>

Local Investment in Child Care (LINCC)
<http://www.kernchildcare.org/lincc>

Kern County's Child Care Industry
 Annual Gross Receipts 1997-2008



Source: Local Investment in Child Care (LINCC)

K-12 EDUCATION

K-12 Education Overview

During the 2007-08 school year, Kern County was home to 47 school districts (K-12). Nearly all of the county's 8,077 teachers had full credentials (95%). The majority of teachers in Kern classrooms were Caucasian (78.7 %) followed by Latino (15.8 %) and African-American (2.4 %) teachers.

Kern County's pupil/teacher ratio was 20.6 students for every teacher during the 2007-08 school year, comparable to the state's ratio of 20.8 students per teacher. The average size of Kern's public school classrooms was 24.2 students, a figure slightly lower than California's average classroom size of 25.2 students.

Enrollment & Student Diversity

In the 2007-08 school year, 174,180 public school students were enrolled in the county's 261 schools. Over the last ten years, Kern County has experienced significant growth, adding over 32,500 students into the county's public school system.

Latino students comprised 57 percent of Kern's total student enrollment, a 66 percent increase since the 1997-98 school year. In comparison, Caucasian student enrollment decreased by 19 percent over the same 10 year period. The percentages of students of African-American (6.6%), Asian/Pacific Islander (2.4%), Philippine (1.7%) and Native American (0.7%) descent have stayed relatively constant since the 1997-98 school year.

Kern schools are linguistically diverse, with 40 languages represented by students countywide. During 2007-08, 38,119 students (21.9 % of total county enrollment) were English learners; another 31,372 students (18.0 % of total enrollment) were newly designated English-proficient students.

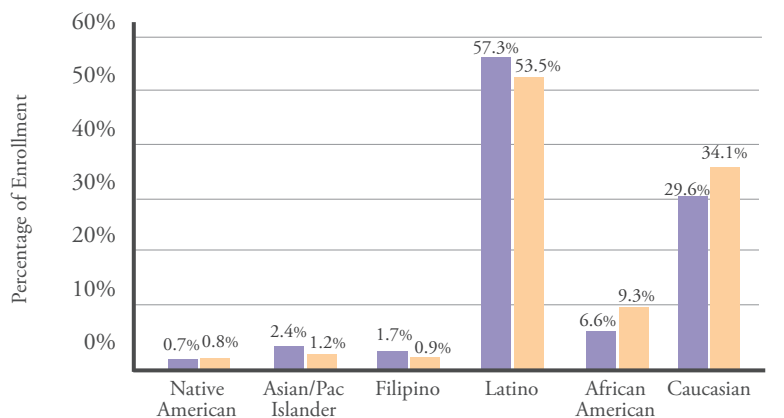


In 2007-08, 103,692 Kern students or 61.5 percent of the total public school enrollment participated in the free and reduced lunch program, a higher rate than California's 50.9 percent.

-- California Department of Education

Total Enrollment and Special Education* Enrollment by Ethnicity

Kern County 2007-08



California Department of Education

Total Enrollment
 Special Education



California

3rd Grade Test Scores (CST) Percent "Proficient" or Above	05-06	06-07	07-08
Reading	36%	37%	38%
Mathematics	58%	58%	61%

7th Grade Test Scores (CST) Percent "Proficient" or Above	05-06	06-07	07-08
Reading	43%	46%	49%
Mathematics	41%	39%	41%

Out-of-School Youth Percent of youth ages 16-19 not in school and without high school diploma	2005	2006	2007
American Community Survey, US Census	6.8%	6.4%	6.5%

Graduation Rates	04-05	05-06	06-07
National Center for Educational Statistics formula	85.1%	83.4%	80.6%

College Prepared Youth	04-05	05-06	06-07
% Grads w/ CSU/UC Require	35.2%	35.9%	35.5%
% 12th Graders Taking SAT	35.9%	36.7%	36.9%

Community Education Levels Percent of all adults 25 and older without at least high school diploma	2005	2006	2007
American Community Survey, US Census	19.9%	19.9%	19.8%

Kern County

3rd Grade Test Scores (CST) Percent "Proficient" or Above	05-06	06-07	07-08
Reading	30%	31%	30%
Mathematics	49%	48%	50%

7th Grade Test Scores (CST) Percent "Proficient" or Above	05-06	06-07	07-08
Reading	35%	38%	39%
Mathematics	34%	34%	34%

Out-of-School Youth Percent of youth ages 16-19 not in school and without high school diploma	2005	2006	2007
American Community Survey, US Census	9.8%	8.2%	7.3%

Graduation Rates	04-05	05-06	06-07
National Center for Educational Statistics formula	84.4%	81.6%	73.5%

College Prepared Youth	04-05	05-06	06-07
% Grads w/ CSU/UC Require	21.6%	22.6%	23.9%
% 12th Graders Taking SAT	22.1%	23.2%	23.7%

Community Education Levels Percent of all adults 25 and older without at least high school diploma	2005	2006	2007
American Community Survey, US Census	27.2%	28.1%	29.9%



Special Education

Kern County's Special Education system served 16,294 children and young adults from newborn to age 22 during the 2007-08 school year. Of these students, 2,045 children were under the age of six and 13,667 children were between the ages of six and 17.

Additionally, 582 young adult students continued to receive educational and transitional services after the age of 18. Overall, 8.6 percent of the total public school enrollment (age 5-22 years) were enrolled in special education services in 2007-08, compared to 10.1 percent statewide.

Almost half of the children and youth receiving Special Education services had a learning disability (45.3%) and 26 percent had a speech or language impairment.

Alternative Education

To be successful in school, students may need a variety of alternative education options to meet their individual needs. These can be mandated, such as continuation schools, or voluntary, such as magnet schools.

In Kern County during the 2007-08 school year, 6,597 students were served through a variety of alternative education programs. This figure represents 3.8 percent of the total student population in the county.

Of these students, 56 percent were enrolled in independent study and 24 percent in magnet schools.

Community In Action

- Project Independence



Youth in the foster care system and after emancipation often experience a total loss of support and have difficulty finding the help they need to be successful as they transition to adulthood. To fill this gap, the Dream Center and Coffee House was opened in the fall of 2008 in downtown Bakersfield to help all current and former foster youth 0 – 90 years old. Assisting youth with educational goals and life skills is one focal point for the Dream Center, but in an effort to prepare youth for emancipation and the reality of life outside of foster care system, the Dream Center also provides access to post-secondary education, training and employment.

One of the best examples of how the Dream Center supports innovative, integrated programs is Project Independence, a joint effort with the Kern High School District's Adolescent Career Training (ACT) Program, Rotary of Bakersfield and Kern County Network for Children supported by United Way of Kern funding. The on-site Coffee Shop serves as a job incubator employing former foster youth and has been successful in mentoring and teaching staff youth basic soft work skills. Additional former foster youth act as receptionists for the Dream Center and as Youth Advocates to help other foster youth navigate the system.

In addition, Project Independence staff provide participating youth with case management services and assist them in overcoming such barriers to work sustainability as clothing, food baskets, crisis interventions and transportation. Project Independence then places and provides oversight of youth in one of the participating business based on skills and what career path the youth desires. The work experience of each youth is regularly evaluated by staff to ensure s/he is meeting the benchmarks of an acceptable employee.

Project Independence By The Numbers:

- 5 former foster youth receiving 16 to 22 hours of paid work experience weekly at the Dream Center and Coffee House through Project Independence
- 4 former foster youth are placed in subsidized work experience in local businesses paid through Project Independence.
- 6 former foster youth have received employment upgrades and moved from a low skill job to a higher skill job
- 7 employability workshops conducted in post-secondary education/training, resumes, interviewing skills, on-the-job etiquette, taxes, nutrition and health
- Development of Project Independence Job Bank with community partners including San Joaquin Bank, Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office, Christine's Boutique, LoLo's, Dagny's Coffee, Arc Technology and Child Support Services

Project Independence and the Dream Center is a true example of how a community of committed individuals and organizations can put aside their own self interests to improve the lives of Kern County's youth.

-- Karine Kanikkeberg
Career Resource Department, Kern High School District

Student Testing

The Standardized Testing and Reporting Program (STAR) uses several tests to measure student performance in California schools. The California Standards Tests (CST) are used to measure mastery of state-adopted standards. California uses five levels of performance when reporting student achievement. The target performance level for all students in California is proficient or above.

CST scores are increasing throughout Kern County schools, however, an achievement gap between those students who are economically disadvantaged and those who are not continues to exist. In 2008, 29 percent of Kern’s economically disadvantaged students (2nd – 7th grade) scored at proficient and advanced in English-Language Arts compared to 57 percent of non-economically disadvantaged students. In math, 36 percent of economically disadvantaged students scored at proficient and advanced in comparison to 58 percent of non-economically disadvantaged students.

3rd Grade Reading and Math

In Kern County during the 2007-08 school year, 31 percent of 3rd graders were proficient or above in English Language Arts and 50 or 60 percent were proficient or above in Mathematics.

Statewide, 38 percent of 3rd grade students were proficient or above in English Language Arts and 61 percent were proficient or above in Mathematics.

7th Grade Reading and Math

In Kern County during the 2007-08 school year, 39 percent of 7th graders were proficient or above in English Language Arts and 34 percent were proficient or above in Mathematics. This figure in math has remained unchanged for the past two years.

Statewide, 49 percent of 7th grade students were proficient or above in English Language Arts and 41 percent were proficient or above in Mathematics.

High School Exit Exam

During the 2007-08 school year, 75 percent of 10th graders tested passed the English Language Arts portion and 75 percent passed the exam’s Mathematics section. Statewide, 79 percent of California’s 10th graders tested passed the English Language Arts portion and 78 percent passed the exam’s Mathematics section.



“The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.”

-- Robert Maynard Hutchins

CAHSEE Exam: Percent of Passing 10th Graders (2007-08)	English-Language Arts	Mathematics
Native American	76%	78%
Asian/Pacific Islander	82%	87%
Filipino	87%	87%
Latino	69%	69%
African-American	66%	63%
Caucasian	86%	84%
English Learners	29%	42%
Special Education	18%	20%
Economically Disadvantaged	67%	68%

California Department of Education

College Preparation

In California, students are believed to be fully prepared for a four-year college when they have completed all of the “A-G” class requirements for entering the California State University(CSU)/University of California (UC) system with a grade of “C” or better. In Kern County during 2006-07, about 24 percent of students graduated with all “A-G” classes completed consistent with the previous school year rate. Thirty-six percent of seniors statewide completed these requirements.

In Kern County, female graduates (27.4%) were more likely to graduate with CSU and UC college prep classes than male graduates (20.1%). Asian/Pacific Islander (62.0%), Filipino (44.5%) and Caucasian (29.9%) graduates exceeded the County’s A-G requirement completion rate. Latino and African-American graduates each had a completion rate of 17.6 percent.

Most college bound students take the SAT college admissions exam, now called SAT Reasoning Test. The SAT contains three sections with scores of 200 to 800 for a maximum score of 2400. During the 2006-07 school year, 23.7 percent of Kern’s 12th graders took the SAT exam, compared to 36.9 percent of 12th graders statewide. Kern County students averaged 486 in Math, 463 in Writing and 469 in Verbal. Kern’s average scores were below the State’s scores of 513 in Math, 491 in Writing and 493 in Verbal.

Graduation

High school graduation rates within Kern County have consistently been lower than the statewide rate. In Kern County, 8,877 students met graduation requirements during the 2006-07 school year, a graduation rate of 73.5 per 100 students. This figure represents a decline of about 11 points over the past two years. The graduation rate in the state was 80.6 per 100 students for the same year.

The actual number of students who dropped out between their freshmen and senior years and did not finish high school, has been traditionally difficult to capture. The 2006-07 school year marks the first year in which drop-out counts were derived from student-level data. Kern County’s adjusted four-year derived dropout rate for the 2006-07 school year was 25.2 percent, a figure higher than California’s drop-out rate of 21.1 percent.

In Kern County, male students (28.5%) had a higher drop-out rate than female students (21.7%) in 2006-07. African-American (32.3%), Latino (29.0%) and Native American (27.3%) students were most likely to drop-out Kern County’s schools. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students in Kern County had a drop-out rate of 18.5 percent, a rate below California’s 25.4 percent.

DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Education, DataQuest
<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

Education Data Partnership
<http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/>

California Postsecondary Education Commission
<http://www.cpec.ca.gov>

2007 American Community Survey
<http://factfinder.census.gov>



A college education serves as the gateway to better options and more opportunity. College going rates have steadily increased over the past five years. In 2007, 44.1 percent of Kern public high school students attended a UC (3.4%), CSU (9.9%) or a community college (30.8%). Kern County’s college going rate was just below the statewide rate of 48.0 percent.

-- California Postsecondary
Education Commission



"A new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities." -- Eda J. Le Shan

CHILD HEALTH

Prenatal Care

Adequate and accessible prenatal health care is vital to the well being of both mother and baby. According to the California Department of Public Health, 74.5 percent of pregnant mothers in Kern County obtained prenatal care services during the first trimester in 2006. In California overall, 85.2 percent of mothers received care during their first trimester.

Prematurity and Low Birthweight

The leading causes of infant death are prematurity, low birth weight and birth defects. During 2006, 15,104 babies were born in Kern County. Of those with a reported gestation period, 13.4 percent were born prior to 37 weeks - the point which defines prematurity. By comparison, 11.0 percent of California's babies were premature.

Newborns have a low birthweight when they weigh less than 5.5 pounds. These infants have increased risk of health complications. The three year (2004-2006) average percentage of low weight births in Kern County was 7.1 percent. By comparison, the three-year average as 6.8 percent for all live births in California.

Births to Young Mothers

Teen mothers and their babies are at greater risk of birth complications and long term health issues. In 2006, 2,119 babies or 14.0 percent of Kern's total births were born to mothers between the ages of 15 to 19. In California, the percentage of births to young mothers was 9.5 percent.

According to the 2008 County Health Status Profile, Kern County's three-year (2004-2006) average rate for births to adolescent mothers was 62.2 per 1,000 live births, the fourth highest rate among California counties. The birth rate for adolescents aged 15 to 19 in Kern County was considerably higher than the state overall (37.8).

Breastfeeding

California Department of Health Services promotes breastfeeding as the most healthy and preferred method of infant feeding for at least the first year of life. The three-year (2004-2006) average breastfeeding rate in Kern County was 81.5 per 100 live births. Statewide, the breastfeeding rate was 86.3 per 100 live births.

Immunizations

The California Department of Health Services conducts an immunization assessment of enrolling Kindergartners to monitor compliance with California's School Immunization Law. In the fall of 2008, 91.3 percent of children enrolling in Kindergarten had all required immunizations. Statewide this figure was 91.7 percent.

Infant Death

The three-year (2003-2005) average mortality rate for infants in Kern County was 6.4 per 1,000 live births. This figure was higher than the California three-year average rate of 5.4.

Nationwide, African-American infants die more frequently than those of any other race/ethnicity. In Kern County, the three-year (2003-2005) average mortality rate for African-American infants was 16.4 per 1,000 live births; in California the figure was 12.0 per 1,000.

DATA SOURCES:

CA Dept of Public Health
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/statistics>

CA Dept of Health Services, Immunization Branch
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/izgroup/shared/levels.htm>

CA Dept of Health Services, County Health Profiles
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/pubsforms/Pubs/OHIRProfiles2008.pdf>



In 2006, 46 percent of Kern County births were to mothers with less than a high school degree, the seventh highest rate among California counties. The education level of a mother has been strongly linked to the healthy development of her child.

-- California Department of Public Health

Late or No Prenatal Care	2004	2005	2006
Kern County	3.3%	4.5%	5.4%
California	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%

Overweight Youth (Percentage of 5 th /7 th /9 th grade)	2005 -2006	2006 -2007	2007 -2008
Kern County	36.5%	36.6%	38.3%
California	32.5%	31.9%	31.2%

Premature Births (Percentage of live births)	2004	2005	2006
Kern County	13.6%	13.1%	13.4%
California	10.9%	11.2%	11.0%

Chlamydia Infection in Youth (Rate per 100,000 population)	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	3300.6	3179.7	3189.8
California	2280.8	2283.3	2314.7

Births to Teen Mothers 15-19 (Percentage of live births)	2004	2005	2006
Kern County	14.7%	14.2%	14.0%
California	9.1%	9.1%	9.4%

Infant Mortality Rate - 3yr avg (Rate per 1,000 live births)	2001 -2003	2002 -2004	2003 -2005
Kern County (All Races)	6.0	6.3	6.4
California (All Races)	5.3	5.4	5.4
Kern County (African-American)	12.9	12.2	16.4
California (African-American)	11.2	11.6	12.0

Births to Teen Mothers 15-19 (Rate per 1,000 population)	2004	2005	2006
Kern County	63.1	61.0	62.5
California	38.2	37.2	37.8

Immunization Rates (% of Kindergarteners enrolling with all required immunizations)	2006	2007	2008
Kern County	93.0%	92.4%	91.3%
California	92.7%	92.1%	91.7%

Kern County Births to Teens 15-19 (2006)	African American	Caucasian	Latino	Asian/ Pac Islander	Native American	Total *
Number of Live Births	162	466	1,431	19	14	2,119
Teen Birth Rate per 1,000 females in race/ethnicity group	79.4	33.4	90.4	15.3	47.0	62.5

* Figures will not total 100 percent as unknown or multiple races are excluded from these tables.

Childhood Obesity & Fitness

A healthy lifestyle, including good nutrition and fitness levels, can significantly reduce an adult's risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. For best lifelong health, good nutrition and activity habits must begin in childhood.

During the 2007-08 school year, 38,535 Kern County 5th, 7th and 9th graders completed California Physical Fitness Testing. Among these students, 38.3 percent had unhealthy body composition based on individual Body Mass Index (BMI) scores. This rate has increased from the previous year's 35.6 percent while the California rates continues to decline.

A review of this physical fitness testing by ethnicity and gender indicates that 42.3 percent of the Latino test-takers in Kern County had unhealthy body composition. Also, on average, boys had poorer body composition than girls.

The 2007 California Health Interview Survey found that 26 percent of Kern County school-age youth (about 23,000) did not engage in vigorous activity at least three days per week. During the survey, these youth were also asked about eating patterns during the past week; 47 percent of youth had eaten fast food more than one time during the last seven days.

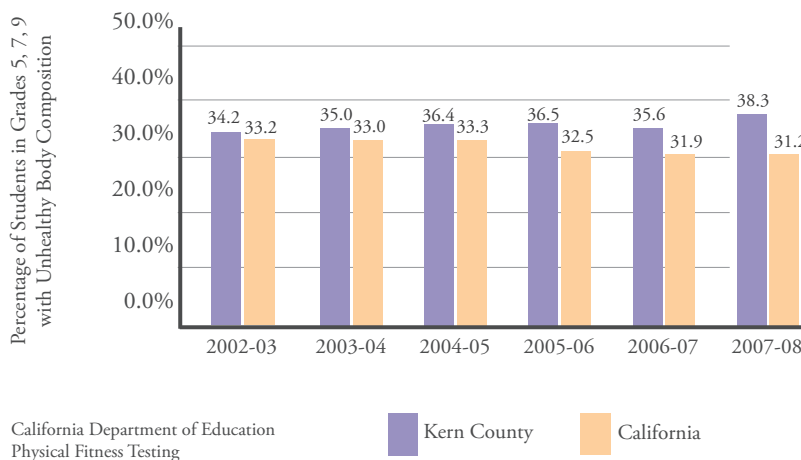
Asthma

Asthma is the leading serious chronic disease of childhood and among the most common cause for emergency room visits and hospitalizations of children. According to the 2007 California Health Interview Survey conducted by UCLA, 22.3 percent of children in Kern County had been diagnosed with asthma during their lifetime. Statewide, the figure was 15.4 percent.

Asthma is prevalent throughout the Central Valley and is often linked to agriculture-generated dust, heavy trucking corridors, rapid population growth and the physical geography of the southern Valley.

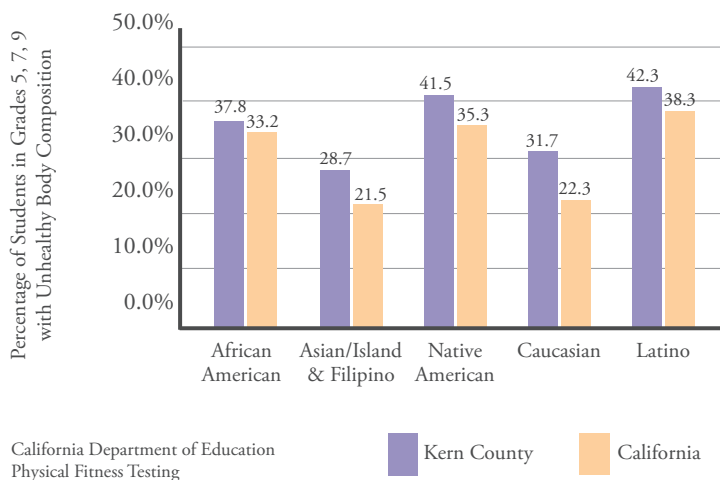
Unhealthy Body Composition of Students 2002-03 through 2007-08

Kern County and California ~ 5th, 7th, & 9th Graders



Unhealthy Body Composition of Students by Ethnicity 2007-08

Kern County and California ~ 5th, 7th, & 9th Graders



Community In Action

- Community Access for Nutritious Foods Project



Food is often the part of a family budget that is squeezed when other costs become too great. In Kern County, more than 350,000 people are affected by hunger and food insecurity. The Community Action Partnership of Kern's (CAPK) Food Bank serves over 135,000 income-eligible residents yearly through 82 pantries and 40 commodity distribution sites. Unfortunately, food bank recipients frequently choose unhealthy foods over nutritious foods because of culture, non-exposure to different foods, and/or their unfamiliarity of healthier foods. There is a need amongst food bank users to increase the eating of nutritious, under-utilized foods such as various types of potatoes, bags of salad, packaged carrots, canned vegetables, and specialty breads.

The Community Access for Nutritious Foods Project is an example of how community partnerships have responded creatively to combat hunger and improve nutrition for families and children. In the summer of 2008, the Kern County Department of Public Health and the CAPK's Food Bank partnered together for the first time on this pilot project to create and promote recipes using common items distributed to families by the food bank.

At its first presentation that August, the Community Access for Nutritious Foods Project served 173 households with 779 individuals using such under-utilized food bank items as beans, rice, fresh vegetables, whole wheat breads and canned vegetables, salmon and chicken. Learning is a central ingredient in the Community Access for Nutritious Foods Project. Attendees at the event saw how to make the meals, taste-tested the recipes and were each given recipe booklets. Participants were surprised that the event was planned for them and their needs. The Community Access for Nutritious Foods Project also connected the attendees with other important services and resources available to low-income individuals and their families by local community agencies. Finally, the success of the project's first event demonstrated how essential the collaboration between local health departments and food banks are in increasing access to healthy foods to create healthier residents for a stronger community.

The Community Access for Nutritious Foods Project is gaining strong momentum. Through its new partnerships with local agencies, the project highlights the problems of food insecurity and unhealthy eating among low-income Kern County families. The project will be conducting future events throughout 2009 to further outreach to food bank recipients on specific nutrition-related issues. For example, in April of 2009, the project will be focusing its presentation on the proper nutrition and healthy eating habits of children and adolescents.

-- Patrick Grijalva
Nutrition Education Program, HPPI
Kern County Department of Public Health

Health Insurance

The California Health Interview Survey asks many questions about health insurance because it increases the likelihood that children remain healthy by providing early identification and treatment of health problems. Parents were asked what type of health insurance coverage they had for their children. Using this measure, most children received their health insurance through their parents' employers (44.3%) or Medi-Cal (40.1%). Moreover, 4.5 percent of Kern County children in 2007 were uninsured.

Communicable Disease

Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted communicable disease in the United States. It is referred to as a "silent" disease because about 75 percent of infected women and 50 percent of infected men have no symptoms. Chlamydia, if left untreated, can cause irreversible damage to female reproductive organs and can be transmitted to newborn babies.

According to the California Department of Public Health, Kern County has the second highest rate of chlamydia cases among California counties. In 2007, the rate of diagnosed infection in females of all ages was 730.3 per 100,000 population. For males, the rate was 410.3 per 100,000. By comparison, California rates were 537.5 and 215.0 for females and males, respectively.

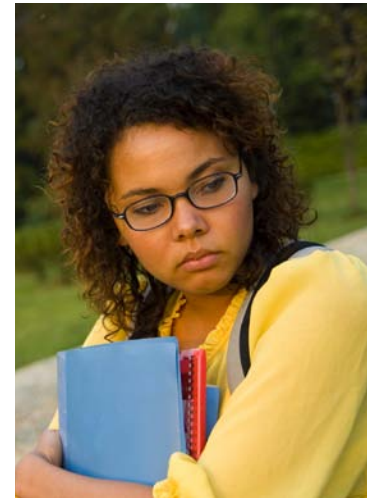
In Kern County, the rates of chlamydia are highest among young women between the ages of 15-19 (3,189.8 per 100,000) and 20-24 (3,164.3 per 100,000). These rates are significantly higher than the California rates of 2,314.7 and 2,863.0 for females in the same age groups, respectively. The highest rates of chlamydia were among African American women (1,894.7 per 100,000) and African American men (1,249.2 per 100,000), followed by Latina women (760.0 per 100,000), Latino men (443.0 per 100,000) and Caucasian women (240.6 per 100,000).

DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Education
<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

California Department of Health Care Services
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/dcdc/STD/stdindex.htm>

California Health Interview Survey
<http://www.chis.ucla.edu/>



Chlamydia infections in Kern County continue to rise especially among African-American women. Over the last five years, the rate of chlamydia infection among African American women in Kern County grew 85 percent compared to 13 percent among Kern County women overall.

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFETY



“In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future.”
-- Alex Haley

Child Abuse and Neglect Overview

Child abuse and neglect affect children of every age, race and income level. Mandated reporters and other concerned adults often refer potentially dangerous situations to Child Protective Services for investigation. The number of referrals can indicate about how many children in the county are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect - an important measure of child safety.

However, referral rates also demonstrate the willingness of community members to report events where children may be in danger. Most child abuse referrals are unfounded and dismissed during the investigative phase.

Substantiated cases are those that have been fully investigated and the situation is found to meet specific state criteria for abuse or neglect. When child abuse allegations are substantiated, Child Protective Services must decide quickly if the situation can be easily remedied. If so, they may leave the children in their home while following the family situation closely. When the situation is more extreme, children must be removed from parental care and placed with a foster family.

Child abuse and neglect information for the State of California is processed by the Center for Social Services at the University of Berkeley. Researchers continually revise the data, so rates and other figures change periodically. Statistics used in this document were taken from the California Children’s Services Archive, CWS/CMS 2008, Quarter 3 Extract.

CPS Referral Rates

In 2007, Kern County's Child Protective Services (CPS) received 17,157 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect, indicating a referral rate of 69.1 per 1,000 children. Statewide, 492,571 referrals were made for investigation, a referral rate of 49.2.

The California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law requires certain professionals to report known or suspected child abuse. In 2007, the single largest source of legally mandated reports were made by legal, law enforcement, and criminal justice personnel (29.7%). Teachers (20.2%), medical personnel (9.2%) and social services workers (7.4%) were the next most frequent sources of reports. About 1 in 10 reports (9.9%) came from nonprofessional sources, such as parents, other relatives, friends, and neighbors.

Child Abuse Rates

In 2007, 5,187 Kern County children (or 30.2%) were found to have been victims of abuse or neglect—an average of about 100 children per week. Child abuse rates per 1,000 children in California counties ranged from 3.1 to 40.1 during 2007. Kern County's substantiated child abuse rate of 20.9 children per 1,000 children increased from the previous year and was nearly twice California's child abuse rate of 10.7. Kern County had the 11th highest child abuse rate in the state.

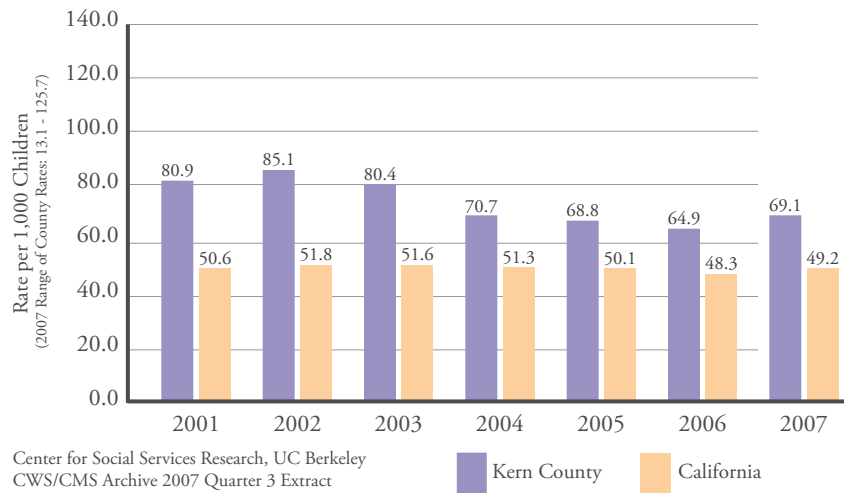
The vast majority of Kern's victims of child abuse experienced general or severe neglect (81.9%), meaning a caretaker failed to provide for the child's basic needs. Fewer children had substantiated referrals for physical abuse (5.1%), caretaker absence/incapacity (5.1%) or sexual abuse (2.6%).

In 2007, African-American children had the highest rate of substantiated abuse reports in Kern County with 43.5 per 1,000 children. Latino (19.7 per 1,000) and Caucasian

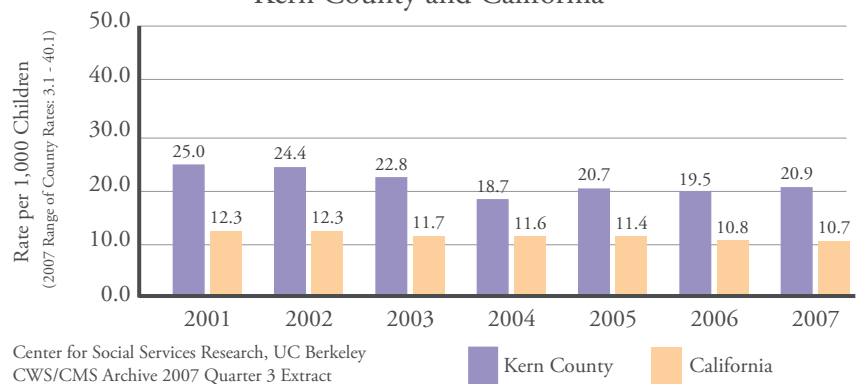
(19.3 per 1,000) children had the next highest rates of substantiated abuse, followed by Native American (11.6 per 1,000) and Asian/Pacific Islander (6.0 per 1,000) children.

Children of all ages experience abuse and neglect, but the youngest children are most vulnerable. In 2007, children younger than one year old had the highest substantiated abuse rate with 49.9 per 1,000 children, 2.4 times higher than Kern's overall rate of substantiated abuse and neglect.

CPS Referral Rates 2001-2007
Kern County and California



Child Abuse Rates 2001-2007
Kern County and California



Community In Action

- Differential Response



Differential Response (DR) expands the ability of Child Protective Services (CPS) to respond differently to suspected reports of child abuse and neglect, by assisting families referred through the Department of Human Services at the first signs of trouble. Utilized throughout the nation, DR services are a primary focus of Kern's Child Welfare Services Self Improvement Plan and concentrate on three unmet needs of Kern County children and their parents: child safety, parent education and support services and integration of services.

Community-based, integrated case management services and Family Resource Center approaches are the foundation for Kern's DR service model. Monitored by the Kern County Network for Children (KCNC), DR services expanded county-wide in 2008. Clinica Sierra Vista, Kernville Union School District, Shafter Healthy Start and Taft School District currently provide DR services in seven different service areas.

Kern's DR services have not only measurably improved outcomes for children and families at-risk of experiencing child abuse and/or neglect, but have also reduced county foster care costs. During the 2007-08 funding year, 1,446 families and 3,413 children throughout the county received DR case managed services. Over the year, family functioning improved by an average of 22 percent after six months of case management services.

DR service providers and agency partners credit DR's success in Kern County to its ability to provide services that garner together Kern's continuum of resources and build upon family strengths through education, advocacy and support. The following data demonstrate the effectiveness of DR services in protecting the safety of Kern County's children:

- DR families are significantly less likely to enter the child welfare services system. A random sampling of Kern's FY 2007-2008 closed cases demonstrated 12.8 percent of Kern families who received DR services had one or more additional referral since their first referral to CPS vs. 33.9 percent of CPS referred families that did not receive DR services.
- Child Help reports that children ages 0-3 are most likely to experience abuse, and 79 percent of children who die from abuse/neglect are under the age of 4. During FY 2007-2008, 994 or 53 percent of the families that received DR services had children ages 0 to 5. During this same year, 1,551 children ages 0 to 5 received DR services.
- During FY 2007-08 the annual cost of providing DR services was \$780 per child, while the annual cost of out-of-home care payments per child was \$8,484. The annual FY 2007-08 out of home cost for all Kern children was projected to exceed \$20,000,000, of which \$8,000,000 was projected to be all county funds.

-- Kern County Network for Children

Foster Care

Of the 5,187 children in Kern County with substantiated abuse during 2007, 1,433 were placed into foster care (28% of substantiated cases). The rate of foster care placement was 5.8 per 1,000 children, a decrease of 19 percent since 2002. However, Kern's entry rate was higher than the statewide rate of 3.6 per 1,000 children, similar to previous years.

During 2007, 1,180 children entered the Kern County foster care system for the first time, a rate of

82 percent of all entries, comparable to California's 81 percent. Moreover, the rate of children entering foster care for the first time consistently has been highest for children under the age of one since 2001.

The number of children in foster care is always changing. However, a point-in-time count is taken on July 1 of each year. On July 1, 2008, there were 2,235 children in the foster care system across Kern County, 242 fewer children than July 1 of last year.

In both Kern County and California, African-American children were in foster care at a rate greater than other children in 2008. Infants (11.2 per 1,000) and toddlers (10.5 per 1,000) experienced the highest rates of entry in the foster care system.

Research shows that placement stability in foster care is essential for a child's healthy development. During the 2007, 69 percent of children who were in Kern County foster care for less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement changes, well below the statewide rate of 82 percent.

Reunification

Returning children safely to their home is the primary goal of CPS. Three out of every four foster children exiting out-of-home care in 2007 reunified with their immediate families in less than 12 months (76%). In comparison, California's reunification rate is 70 percent. Kern County's reunification rate increased for the third straight year and has been higher than the statewide rate since 2006.

During 2007, the median length of time before Kern County children in foster care were reunified with their families was 3.7 months, a shorter length of time than the state's 6.4 months. Throughout Kern County, youth ages 16 to 17 years of age were in care longest before reunification (10.9 months), and infants were in care the shortest amount of time (1.1 months).

Recurrence

Even when reunification is initially successful, some children must be placed again into foster care when another abuse event occurs. Between October, 2006 to September, 2007, 127 of the 907 children reunified with their families returned to foster care in less than 12 months (14.0%). Kern's recurrence after reunification rate was above the state's rate of 11.6 percent for the same year. Younger children (0-5 years) are more likely to experience maltreatment recurrence within a year of reunification than those 11 or older in Kern County. Children under age of 1 were at highest risk. The odds of reentering the foster care system within 1 year of reunification were 2.6 times higher for children from a group home than for a child placed with kin.



Younger children between the ages of 0 to 5 (41%) were more likely to have more than two placement changes than older children between the ages of 11 and 17 (17%) during their first year of foster care.

-- Center for Social Services
Research, UC Berkley

CPS Referral Rates per 1,000 Children	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	64.6	64.9	69.1
California	48.3	48.3	49.2

Substantiated Child Abuse Rates per 1,000 Children	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	19.5	19.5	20.9
California	11.0	10.8	10.7

Foster Care Rates per 1,000 Children (Entry + Re-Entry)	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	8.3	7.3	5.8
California	4.1	4.0	3.6

Percentage of CPS Referrals Substantiated	2005	2006	2007
Kern County	30.2%	30.0%	30.2%
California	22.8%	22.4%	21.8%

Substantiated Child Abuse Rates per 1,000 Children (2007)	African American	Caucasian	Latino	Asian/Pac Islander	Native American	All Children
Kern County	43.5	19.3	19.7	6.0	11.6	20.9
California	25.4	9.0	11.3	4.4	25.2	10.7

Substantiated Child Abuse Rates per 1,000 Children (2007)	Under 1	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-17 yrs
Kern County	49.9	27.1	25.0	20.5	14.1	10.9
California	24.6	12.7	11.2	10.7	9.0	6.7

Foster Care Prevalence Rate per 1,000 Children (Children in care on 7/1/08)	African American	Caucasian	Latino	Asian/Pac Islander	Native American	Total
Kern County	20.7	9.0	8.2	1.6	6.2	8.7
California	29.1	5.2	6.0	1.7	21.2	6.5

Foster Care Prevalence Rate per 1,000 Children (Children in care on 7/1/08)	Under 1	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-17 yrs
Kern County	11.4	10.3	7.1	7.7	9.1	9.4
California	6.6	7.7	5.8	5.5	6.7	8.4

Foster Care Population (2003-08) (Children in care on 7/1/08)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Kern County	2,970	2,892	2,661	2,475	2,477	2,235
California	86,133	81,499	79,067	76,767	74,964	68,138

Community In Action

- Dream Center



In October of 2008, the Dream Center opened its doors to provide a non-traditional environment, where current and emancipated foster youth could receive comprehensive education assistance, transition assistance, and individual linkages to higher education, vocation, and/or community employment; with the inclusion of a working coffee shop that serves as a job incubator.

The Dream Center strives to improve the transitional success of foster youth by creating a system of informal and formal support services to reduce duplication of services and increase service accessibility for youth. Agency programs currently located on site include:

- Kern County Network for Children
- Foster Youth Services of Kern County (FYS)
- Project Independence—Kern High School District
- Kern County Probation
- Transition Age Youth (TAY)
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Central Valley
- Dream Team - Foster Youth Advisory Committee
- Independent Living Program

The programs and collaborations supported by the Dream Center all have the same goal in sight -- helping current and former foster youth in need lead more healthy, productive and self-sufficient lives. During its first six months of operation, the Project DREAM tutoring program at the Dream Center has expanded to three tutoring sites. Dream Center youth lead and/or participate in the Dream Team advisory committee providing input in the Dream Center's services, youth activities and county policy development regarding foster youth issues. In addition, these youth actively reach out to organizations in the community and frequently speak at state and local conferences to create awareness of foster youth issues.

The Dream Center outreaches to youth in care by hosting weekly events and workshops such as College Study Nights, Movie Nights, Parenting Teens Support Groups, California Youth Connection meetings and financial planning workshops conducted by former foster youth trained by Alta One Federal Credit Union. To help connect foster youth to the services they need, the Dream Center offers computer lab and resource bank. Emancipated foster youth have been trained at the Dream Center to serve as advocates for youth in care and Peer Mentors to help make interested foster youth aware of services in the community.

Every day, the Dream Center sees current and former foster youth making healthy, successful, independent transitions to adulthood as the result of its comprehensive services. These are some of their stories.

Max, a 20 year old former foster youth who originally from New York lived in over 15 foster homes/group homes since he was 11 due to abuse and neglect. "It was rough," he explains and he never felt connected. Max's involvement with CYC-California Youth Connection led him to the Dream Center to work with the Independent Living Program. He immediately fell in love with the resource center and feels for the first time that he has a family that supports his dreams. Recently, Dream Center staff bought Max a cake to celebrate his 20th birthday. He reared up while the staff sang him "Happy Birthday." Staff later discovered it was the first time in Max's life that he got a birthday cake or balloons. Through collaborative efforts between Dream Center staff and Bakersfield College Outreach Programs, this special young man now has financial aid and work study and is applying to be a Bakersfield College Ambassador. Without the connections at the Dream Center, Max says he would have never found his way to college.

For the last two years, 17 year old "Anna" has participated in the Project DREAM tutoring program. She entered foster care at a very young age and eventually found herself on Juvenile Probation. She has had many struggles throughout her high school career, bouncing from school to school and eventually ending up at a community school due to truancy, behavioral problems, and overall poor academic performance. As a result of the hard work and dedication from Anna and her tutor, she was able to catch up on her credits and transition back to mainstream education at a local high school. She is now on track to graduate in June 2010 with her peers. Anna says that tutoring gave her the help she needed focus on her homework, something that is not easily done in the chaotic environment of her group home.

With strong community partnership between both the public and private sector, the ability to co-locate agency staff, and the support of foster youth, the Dream Center hope to give youth endless opportunities to thrive!

-- Carrie Bloxom
Foster Youth Services of Kern County

Preserved Family Relationships

For those children living in foster care, the preservation of natural family relationships is important in maintaining a child's positive sense of identity and knowledge of cultural, personal, and family histories. Whenever possible, sibling units are placed in the same foster home. Between 2004 and 2008, the percent of Kern County's foster youth placed with at least one sibling figure has steadily increased each year from 61 percent to 67 percent.

Additionally, of Kern County children in out-of-home care on July 1, 2008, 32 percent were living with relatives while in care compared to 35 percent statewide. Since 2006, the percent of children placed with kin has been steadily decreasing.

Emancipation

Some children remain in foster care until they are 18 or have graduated from high school. These youth are often referred to as "aging out" or emancipating from foster care. In Kern County, 106 youth were either discharged to emancipation or turned 18 while still in foster care from October 2007 through September 2008, 16 fewer youth than the previous year. The majority of these youth had been in foster care for 3 years or longer.

Because the transition from foster care to adulthood is very difficult, the Department of Human Services offers a voluntary Independent Living Program (ILP) to qualifying foster youth ages 16 and older, and multidisciplinary Urgent Action Team services for youth emancipating without support or plan at emancipation.

In Kern County during the period October 2007 through September 2008, 997 foster youth were offered ILP services and 595 (60%) accepted those services. Statewide, 73 percent accepted ILP services. Of the students receiving Independent Living Program services, 16 percent were parenting their own children. Eight percent graduated or completed high school equivalency while the remainder of the youths continued and/or were currently enrolled in high school/GED or adult education and. Fourteen percent were enrolled in college and 23 percent were employed either full or part time.

DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Social Services
<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/>

Center for Social Services Research, UC Berkeley
<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/>



In July of 2008, 44 percent of Kern's children in foster care had been in care for two years or more and 19 percent had been in care five years or more.

-- Center for Social Services
Research, UC Berkeley



“Children sweeten labors, but they make misfortunes more bitter.”
 -- Francis Bacon

Kern County Child & Community Safety

Submersion / Drowning (Number of children 0-17 killed or injured)	2004	2005	2006
Fatal Injury	6	5	3
Non-Fatal Hospitalization	13	8	12

Assault/Homicide (Number of children 0-17 killed or injured)	2004	2005	2006
Fatal Injury	3	10	5
Non-Fatal Hospitalization	41	35	31

Motor Vehicle Related (Number of children 0-17 killed or injured)	2004	2005	2006
Fatal Injury	9	20	21
Non-Fatal Hospitalization	179	166	119

Domestic Violence (Calls for Assistance to Law Enforcement)	2004	2005	2006
Number of Calls	3,417	3,394	3,117
Rate per 100,000 pop.	623.0	707.2	632.8

Self-Inflicted Injury / Suicide (Number of children 0-17 killed or injured)	2004	2005	2006
Fatal Injury	2	3	0
Non-Fatal Hospitalization	36	25	19

Crime Rates (Number of crimes per 100,000 pop)	2005	2006	2007
Violent Crimes	506.0	526.1	566.7
Property Crimes	2,558.7	2,538.0	2,416.7

Missing Children

During 2008, 4,799 children were reported missing in Kern County. Of these, 4,658 were suspected runaways, 9 were lost, 28 were suspected family abduction, 26 were missing under suspicious circumstances, and 76 were reported under unknown circumstances.

Law enforcement officers log missing children reports into the Department of Justice Missing Persons System. Statistics taken from this database include the number of children entered into and canceled in the system during the given year. During 2008, 4,478 of the missing child reports previously noted were canceled: 3,417 children were returned, 747 were located, 105 were arrested, 2 were deceased and 163 were removed from the system for other reasons; 321 children remained missing at year end.

DATA SOURCE:

California Office of the Attorney General
<http://ag.ca.gov/missing/stats.php>

Childhood Unintentional Injury

During 2006, 525 children in Kern County were hospitalized for accidental injury. Additionally, 40 children died from accidental injuries. In both county and state, the most common nonfatal accidental injuries among children are fall-related. Thirty percent of Kern County's hospitalizations for injury were due to falls. Most fatal accidents among children in Kern County were automobile-related and suffocation.

The California Health Interview Survey conducted by UCLA, asks health and behavior questions of children and youth. The 2003 Survey found that 22 percent of Kern's youth population aged 12-17 did not always wear seatbelts and 19 percent had, in the past, ridden with a driver who had been drinking. Statewide these figures were 20 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

In California, drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death among toddlers and preschoolers and the fourth leading cause among children of all ages. During 2006, 3 drowning and 12 near-drowning episodes happened in Kern County. Eighty-three percent of the children hospitalized for near-drowning were under five years old.

DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Health Services
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/epic/>

California Health Interview Survey
<http://www.chis.ucla.edu/>

EPICenter, California Injury Data Online
<http://www.applications.dhs.ca.gov/epicdata/>



During 2008, 97 percent of the 4,658 Kern County children reported missing were runaways. By the end of the year, 321 children remained missing.

-- Department of Justice,
Missing Persons

Child Deaths

During 2007, Kern County's Child Death Review Team investigated 59 child deaths that met the coroner's review criteria. The vast majority of the cases reviewed were determined either accidental or unintentional (75%). Twenty percent of deaths were from natural causes and five percent were from homicide. Just over half of the deaths reviewed occurred within Metro Bakersfield (51%).

Twenty of the reviewed deaths, or 34 percent of the cases, were infants under age one. Among infants, the most common causes of death were unsafe sleeping environment or positional asphyxia (45%) and pneumonia (15%). Two infants died from congenital heart defects and two infants were killed as passengers in motor vehicle accidents. Other causes of death included a drowning, plane crash and health related causes.

Motor vehicle accidents were the most common cause of unnatural death among the remaining 39 cases reviewed of children over age one. During 2007, nine children died as passengers in motor vehicles. Most notable, six of these children were restrained in the vehicle. Three children died in ATV-related crashes, three in a plane crash and three in bicycle accidents. Three children died as pedestrians in motor vehicle accidents.

In 2007, seven children died from drowning and five children died from medical causes. The deaths of three children were identified as homicide with two of these children identified as gunshot victims. Other causes of death for children in this age group include an accidental crushing, positional asphyxia, and smoke inhalation.

The Child Death Review Team identified family issues that occurred prior to the child's death. Fifty-three percent of the 59 cases had at least one reported family issue preceding the child's death. Inadequate supervision (26%), substance abuse (20%) and chronic health condition (19%) were most frequently identified.

DATA SOURCE:
Kern Child Abuse Prevention Council, CDRT
<http://www.havencounselingcenter.org/>

Youth Violence

During the 2005-06 school year, the California Healthy Kids Survey asked health and behavior questions to 13,500 seventh, ninth, and eleventh graders. According to the survey, 26 percent of all students surveyed had been in a physical fight one or more times at school and 16 percent had damaged school property on purpose. Thirteen percent of students had brought a weapon to school and 5 percent had carried a gun onto school property.

Eleven percent of Kern's seventh grade students identified themselves as gang members. Among ninth and eleventh grade students, eight percent identified themselves as gang members. Students served by Kern's nontraditional continuation schools were most likely to identify themselves as gang members (15%). In California, rates of gang involvement for the three grade levels were nine, eight, and seven percent, respectively.



To reduce the risk of suffocation, infants should be placed for sleep on their back on a firm crib mattress covered by a sheet firm sleep surface. Soft materials or objects such as pillows, quilts and comforters should not be placed under a sleeping infant.

-- American Academy
of Pediatrics

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has found that too much idle time and too little positive adult supervision are contributing factors to delinquent and risky behaviors among young people. When older teens are not connected to school or jobs, idle time is abundant and supervision is reduced.

In 2007, about 2,750 Kern County youths age 16 to 19 without high school diplomas were not enrolled in school and were not employed, a rate of 5.4 percent

of that age group. Despite its decrease from 6.3% in 2006, Kern County figure remains higher than the state (3.9%) and national (4.3%) figures.

DATA SOURCES:

California Healthy Kids Survey
http://www.wested.org/pub/docs/chks_bsearch.html

2007 American Community Survey
<http://factfinder.census.gov>

Community In Action

- The Lamont SAL



Driven by volunteers from law enforcement and the community, the Kern County Sheriff's Activities League's (SAL) goal is to reduce juvenile victimization, crime, and delinquency through mentoring and activities such as academic tutoring, sports, crafts, games, computer training, leadership training, field trips and much more. The Kern County SAL currently has four programs operating: East Bakersfield, Lamont, Wasco, and Kern Valley.

The Lamont SAL program provides opportunities for participating youth to expand their horizons and give back to their communities. In 2008, the SAL youth from Lamont have served with several organizations countywide, from national nonprofits like Salvation Army and the Buddy Walk to local community agencies events such as Probation department's fun runs, Community Action Partnership clothing drives and Kern County libraries' story time events. The Lamont SAL youth participated in more than 20 various trash and graffiti clean up operations around Lamont and Weedpatch. They are currently involved in the Keep Kern Roads Clean program for three adopted roadways that include parts of Panama Road, Sunset Road and Edison Highway. For the year, Lamont SAL kids used 600 large trash bags and over 200 gallons of paint!

Throughout 2008, youth in the Lamont SAL were busy serving their community. During the winter holidays, Lamont SAL youth helped the Salvation Amy with toy sorting and made and delivered about 1,800 custom Christmas cards and candy bags to local seniors. At Easter, SAL youth helped with a Easter egg hunt for homeless children by hiding candy and helping to set up the event. On Mother' Day, Lamont SAL youth made over 1,800 custom cards for seniors and delivered them to retirement homes and senior centers in Lamont and Bakersfield.

Several local agencies rely on Lamont SAL youth for their community events, fundraisers, and health fairs. For example, in "Light the Town Pink," youth passed out flyers and installed pink architectural lighting at homes and businesses in Bakersfield to increase breast cancer awareness. Youth also assist with setting up and tearing down events, creating displays and putting on booths with fun activities for children. Their time and service was a valuable part of each events' success. These activities are just some of the many activities that represent over 4,200 hours of community service that the Lamont SAL youth have performed in their communities in 2008.

-- Detective John Money, Lamont SAL Coordinator
Kern County Sheriff's Department

Domestic Violence

During 2006, Kern County law enforcement officers recorded 3,417 calls for assistance in domestic violence situations, a rate of 623.0 calls per 100,000 population. This rate decreased from 632.8 calls per 100,000 population in 2005. The California rate of calls for assistance also decreased from 707.8 calls per 100,000 in 2005 to 654.7 calls per 100,000 in 2006.

Of the 3,417 calls for assistance in Kern County during 2006, nine percent involved the use of firearms, knives, or other dangerous weapons. Another 38 percent involved personal weapons, such as hands, fists or feet. In total, 47 percent of these calls for assistance involved weapons.

A study conducted by Kern County's Domestic Violence Death Review Team indicates 28 children have been impacted by the death of one or both parents due to intimate partner murder or murder-suicide during the five year period from 1999 through 2004. Thirteen of these children witnessed the event.

DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Justice

<http://safestate.org/statreports/index.cfm?navid=395>

Kern Domestic Violence Death Review Team
Report by Doris Hall and others of California State University Bakersfield, Department of Criminal Justice

Crime Rates

Violent and Property Crime

During 2007, the violent crime rate for Kern County was 566.7 per 100,000 population, a rate higher than California's 507.0 per 100,000 population. The incidences of aggravated assault (398.4 per 100,000 population) and robbery (139.8 per 100,000 population) within Kern County increased for the second year.

Kern's property crime rate was 2,416.7 per 100,000 population in 2007. This figure decreased for the second year, but remained higher than the state rate of 1,803.6. The rates of burglary

(1,012.5 per 100,000 population) and motor vehicle theft (657.4 per 100,000 population) in Kern County have also declined for the second consecutive year.

Juvenile Arrests

About one-third of the juveniles arrested in Kern County were arrested for felony offenses (32%) in 2007. Kern's juvenile felony arrest rate during 2007 was 1,697.8 per 100,000 youth, a decrease from the 2006 rate of 1,782.5 per 100,000 youth. However, the felony arrest rate among Kern's youth continued to be higher than the state rate of 1,421.5 per 100,000 youth.

Kern County rates of juvenile felony arrests for both violent crimes and property offenses have increased. Arrests for violent offenses rose from 296.6 per 1,000 youth in 2005 to 427.6 in 2007, a 44 percent increase. This figure is higher than the statewide rate of 387.6 per 100,000 population.

From 2005 to 2007, the arrest rate for property offenses increased at a slower pace from 749.8 per 1,000 youth to 763.6. In contrast, the arrest rate for drug offenses dropped from 121.7 per 1,000 youth in 2005 to 59.6 in 2007, a 51 percent decrease.

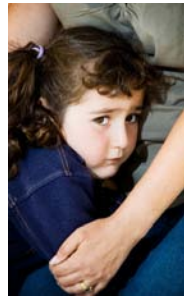
Kern County rates of juvenile felony arrests for both violent crimes and property offenses have increased. Arrests for violent offenses rose from 296.6 per 1,000 youth in 2005 to 427.6 in 2007. From 2005 to 2007, the arrest rate for property offenses increased at a slower pace from 749.8 per 1,000 youth to 763.6. In contrast, the arrest rate for drug offenses dropped from 121.7 per 1,000 youth in 2005 to 59.6 in 2007, a 51 percent decrease.

Nearly half of the juveniles arrested in Kern County were arrested for misdemeanor offenses (44%) in 2007. Kern County's juvenile misdemeanor arrest rate in 2007 was 2,391.1 per 100,000 youth, a 9 percent decrease in one year. The county's rate was below California's 2,891.3 per 100,000 during the same year.

DATA SOURCE:

California Department of Justice

http://stats.doj.ca.gov/cjsc_stats/prof07/index.htm



A child witnessing abusive behavior between adults in the home is more likely to experience neglect or abuse. In a 2007 survey, 44 percent of female respondents in Kern County had experienced violence from their partner in the past year.

-- California Health Interview Survey

2009 COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

Since 1992, Kern County communities have partnered together as Community Collaboratives to better care for children and families. Twenty of these partnerships have completed an in-depth application process and review by Kern County Network for Children and have been designated Accredited Community Collaboratives. Most Community Collaboratives host a Family Resource Center (FRC) or Community Resource Center (CRC). The following list can be used to refer individuals or families to needed services within their own community.



Family Resource Centers are “one-stop” centers that provide multiple resources for individuals and families in need within their own community.

Accredited Community Collaboratives

Arvin	Arvin Collaborative and FRC.....	661.854.6525
Bakersfield	34th Street Neighborhood Partnership.....	661.326.3051
	East Bakersfield Community Collaborative and CRC	661.325.3730
	Greenfield H.E.L.P.S. Collaborative and FRC	661.837.3720
	Rosedale Collaborative.....	661.631.6859
	South Chester Collaborative and FRC	661.631.5895
	Southeast Neighborhood Partnership and FRC	661.322.3276
Buttonwillow	Buttonwillow Community Collaborative and CRC.....	661.764.9405
Frazier Park Area	Mountain Communities Collaborative and FRC.....	661.245.4303
Lake Isabella Area	Kern River Valley Collaborative and FRC	760.379.2556
Lamont/Weedpatch	Lamont/Weedpatch Collaborative and FRC.....	661.845.2724
Lost Hills	Lost Hills Collaborative	661.797.3042
McFarland	McFarland Community Collaborative and FRC	661.792.5524
Mojave Area	East Kern Collaborative and FRC	661.824.4118
Ridgecrest Area	Indian Wells Valley Collaborative and FRC.....	760.375.4357
Shafter	Shafter Healthy Start Collaborative and FRC.....	661.746.8690
Taft Area	Greater Westside “Together We Can” Collaborative and CRC.....	661.765.7281
Wasco	Wasco Collaborative	661.720.5835
Kern County	Kern Senior Network	661.868.0151
	Richardson Special Needs Collaborative and FRC.....	661.336.5482

Other Community Collaboratives

Bakersfield	Oildale Collaborative and CRCs	661.392.2163
	Fairfax/Brundage Neighborhood Partnership	661.979.2635
California City	California City Collaborative	760.373.8606
Delano	Delano Neighborhood Partnership and CRC.....	661.721.7036

2009 GOVERNING BOARD

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Kern County Public Defender

DON CARTER
Kern High School District

MORGAN CLAYTON
Tel-Tec Security Systems

KAREN COOLEY
Kern Child Abuse Prevention Council

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Kern County Department of Mental Health

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United Way of Kern County

MAGDA MENENDEZ
Mexican American Opportunity Foundation

STEPHEN PELZ
Housing Authority of the County of Kern

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