



REPORT CARD  
2006

KERN COUNTY NETWORK FOR CHILDREN

**SUGGESTED CITATION:**

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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.

## WELCOME

The Kern County Network for Children is pleased to present its eighth annual Report Card. Each year it helps remind us of the challenges we face when it comes to child well-being in Kern County and the successes we have had while improving the conditions of our children and their families.

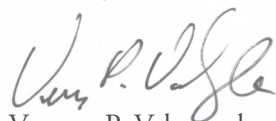
Our Governing and Advisory Boards demonstrate on a continual basis their commitment to children and families by advocating for local solutions to local needs. We believe that by bringing people and organizations together, providing tools needed to empower residents and communities, and focusing on family and community strengths, we can truly improve lives.

The Network has always believed that all children are valuable and that through family and communities children learn the skills to become productive and responsible members of society. In order to strengthen the capacity of families and communities to deal effectively with the pressing problems of poverty, medical and mental health issues, education outcomes, teen pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse, runaways, gang violence, and delinquency, we must continue to develop integrated approaches to accessible services and resources throughout Kern County.

I believe many of the positive changes countywide, with regard to children and families, are directly related to the Network helping create a safe and inclusive environment for getting things done. I believe that systemic change happens when empowered people come together to turn a vision for their community into reality.

Children matter in our community and we are grateful for your support as we work toward keeping our children safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Vernon P. Valenzuela, M.F.T.  
KCNC Governing Board President





Kern County children make up approximately 32 percent of the total population. Of all families in the county, 56 percent are raising children under the age of 18.

-- American Community Survey

# COUNTY OVERVIEW

## Kern County, California

Kern County is located at the southern end of California's Great Central Valley. As the state's third-largest county in land area, Kern covers 8,200 square miles with three distinct physical environments: valley, mountain, and desert. The county includes eleven incorporated cities and 41 additional unincorporated communities recognized by the US Census Bureau.

Home to an estimated 780,000 residents in January 2006, Kern County is experiencing unprecedented growth. According to the California Department of Finance, Kern is the fourth fastest-growing county in California based on its one-year percentage growth of 2.9 percent. Kern County's population is expected to top 950,000 by 2020 and 1.1 million by 2030.

Between January 2005 and January 2006, Kern grew by about 22,000 individuals. Of these, 14,000 made their home in the city of Bakersfield, the seat of county government. The estimated population of the City of Bakersfield is now 312,000, making it one of California's eleven cities with more than 300,000 residents. Metropolitan Bakersfield is much larger with an estimated 468,000 residents, or about 60 percent of the county's total population.

The following chart 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 2004 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

### DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Finance  
<http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/demograp/e-1press.pdf>  
[http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/demograp/dru\\_publications/projections/P1\\_Press\\_Release\\_5-04.pdf](http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/demograp/dru_publications/projections/P1_Press_Release_5-04.pdf)

Center for Social Services Research, UC Berkeley  
[http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/population/data/POPf\\_EA0-17\\_2006\\_15.html](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/population/data/POPf_EA0-17_2006_15.html)

Kern Council of Governments  
[www.kerncog.org](http://www.kerncog.org)

Population of Kern County Children by Ethnicity and Age (2006)	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pac Islander	Native American	Other	Total
Total Children (0-17)	14,350	70,043	124,403	7,723	2,679	5,292	224,490
Percentage of Total Children	6.4%	31.2%	55.4%	3.4%	1.2%	2.4%	100.0%
Under 1	704	3,771	8,273	418	158	239	13,563
1-2	1,338	7,034	15,893	872	310	451	25,898
3-5	1,854	9,576	21,354	1,061	259	1,300	35,404
6-10	3,729	17,578	32,706	2,044	690	1,389	58,136
11-15	4,825	22,261	33,946	2,388	944	1,417	65,781
16-17	1,900	9,823	12,231	940	318	496	25,708

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## Per Capita Income

This indicator is often used to measure the economic health of a region. The per capita income figure is calculated by dividing an area's total personal income by the number of residents. Unfortunately, these measures can differ depending on the government agency providing the information.

The US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) takes income figures from business receipts. Using BEA data, the State of California had per capita income of \$35,219 in 2004. During the same year, Kern County's per capita income was \$24,335, or 30.9 percent less than the average Californian. The BEA reports the per capita income of the United States was \$33,050.

The US Census Bureau uses individual and business surveys for income figures. These numbers are presented annually in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

According to the 2004 Survey, the per capita income of California was \$25,411. Kern County residents had per capita income of \$17,763, or 30.1 percent less personal income than the state average. The Census Bureau reports the per capita income of the United States was \$24,020.

Despite the method being used, Kern County residents have significantly less personal income, about 30 percent less, than other Californians.

### DATA SOURCES:

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

US Census Bureau  
<http://factfinder.census.gov>

## Unemployment

In Kern County, an annual average labor force of 328,800 was available for work during 2005. Of these, 301,600 were working and 27,200 were seeking employment.

The official annual average unemployment rate for Kern County was 8.3 percent during 2005. By comparison, California's annual average rate of unemployment was 5.4 percent.

Unemployment rates fluctuate throughout the year. But, in 2005, both the county and state had the highest unemployment rates during the month of February: 10.3 percent in Kern County and 6.1 percent in California.

Outlying communities often have higher unemployment rates than Metro Bakersfield. The following communities had the highest unemployment rates in the county during 2005.

Community	2005 Annual Avg Unemployment Rate
Buttonwillow CDP .....	10.2
Mojave CDP .....	10.4
Ford City CDP (portion of Taft) .....	13.7
Shafter city .....	15.0
Lamont CDP .....	15.2
Weedpatch CDP .....	15.5
Wasco city .....	15.7
McFarland city .....	17.8
Onyx CDP .....	22.2
Delano city .....	22.3
Arvin city .....	23.1

CDP is an abbreviation for Census Designated Place, a term used for small unincorporated communities.

### DATA SOURCE:

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



Areas with seasonal economies, such as the agriculture industry, tend to have higher unemployment than other regions.

-- California EDD



Single mothers with children under age five are the families most likely to live in poverty. During 2004, 44 percent of Kern County's single mothers with young children were impoverished.

-- 2004 American Community Survey

Children in Poverty (0-17)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	29.0%	25.0%	28.0%
California	18.2%	18.6%	18.9%

Children in Poverty (0-4)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	33.7%	29.3%	33.2%
California	19.7%	20.3%	20.5%

Children in Poverty (5-17)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	27.3%	23.4%	25.4%
California	17.6%	18.0%	17.7%

All Families with Children Percent Living in Poverty	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	27.6%	23.6%	23.2%
California	16.3%	17.0%	15.3%

Single Moms with Children Percent Living in Poverty	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	51.3%	41.0%	39.4%
California	38.0%	40.0%	34.2%

Hourly Wage Needed to Afford Two-Bedroom Apt	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	\$11.44	\$11.62	\$12.00
California	\$21.18	\$21.24	\$22.09



## Poverty

The US Census Bureau conducts the American Community Survey annually. This survey provides official estimates of population, income, education and many other data sets between each decennial census.

According to the most recent Survey, 222,949 children lived in Kern County during 2004. Of these, 28.0 percent were living in poverty. This poverty statistic ranks Kern County 25 of 236 surveyed counties, making Kern one of the poorest counties in the nation. By comparison, 18.9 percent of children statewide were living in poverty.

Among Kern County families raising children, 23.2 percent were impoverished. Families headed by single mothers were the poorest with 39.4 percent living in poverty. The figure was highest (44.3 percent) for single mothers with all children under the age of five.

The US Department of Health and Human Services uses an annual poverty guideline to determine eligibility for federal assistance programs. During 2006, the federal poverty guideline for a family of four in California is set at \$20,000.

### DATA SOURCES:

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<http://factfinder.census.gov>

US Department of Health and Human Services

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/06poverty.shtml>

## Child Support

Although many factors hinder the successful collection of court-ordered child support, the financial support of children is an important part of parenting. Meeting the financial needs of children is often hard for two-parent families, but is especially difficult for custodial single parents without assistance from the non-custodial parent. Timely payment of child support often determines whether a child lives in poverty.

According to the nationwide report on child support produced in 2003 by the US Census Bureau, a family with children headed by a single custodial parent is four times more likely to live in poverty than a married-couple raising children.

During the 2004-05 federal fiscal year, Kern County Department of Child Support Services served 66,000 children represented by 58,340 open support cases. Eighty-two percent of these cases had formal support orders established for the noncustodial parent by the court system. The remaining parents paid support voluntarily through the Department.

Of the \$71.9 million owed to Kern County children from non-custodial parents, \$35.5 million (49.4 percent) was collected and distributed as current support. This figure is significantly higher than the amount collected and distributed during 2000-01 (35 percent).

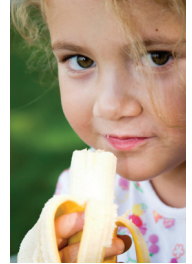
### DATA SOURCES:

Kern County Department of Child Support Services

<http://www.co.kern.ca.us/childsupport>

US Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p60-225.pdf>



Not surprisingly, those most likely to face hunger are the most vulnerable in society: families with poverty-level incomes, single mothers and children, and the elderly.

-- Food First,  
Oakland, CA

## Housing

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

The Census Bureau's American Community Survey reports 85,653 renting households in Kern County during 2004, or 38 percent of 228,513 total households. Of these renting households, 53.1 percent were cost burdened, spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent.

During 2004, the median gross rent in Kern County was \$581, a 12 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 2005 Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Kern County was \$624.

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 2005, the monthly housing wage was \$2,080; the full-time hourly housing wage was \$12.00.

DATA SOURCES:  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
<http://nlihc.org/oor2005/>

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey  
<http://factfinder.census.gov/>

US Department of Housing and Urban Development  
<http://www.hud.gov>



The homeownership rate in Bakersfield and Kern County is about 63 percent, still significantly trailing the national average, but better than most regions in California. The state's homeownership rate is almost dead last, 49th of the 50 states. Compared to the national average of nearly 70 percent, only 58 percent of Californians own a home, and homeownership levels are significantly lower for California's growing Latino population.

-- Campaign for California Homeownership

# EDUCATION INDICATORS

## Education Overview

Kern County was home to 49 school districts employing 7,827 full-time equivalent teachers during the 2004-05 school year. Nearly 95 percent of the county's teachers had full credentials, with the remainder holding emergency credentials, waivers, or serving as interns prior to receiving a full credential. After June 2006, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing will no longer issue emergency credentials.

## Enrollment

During the 2004-05 school year, 165,817 public school students were enrolled in the county's 246 schools. Approximately 6,000 additional students attended private schools throughout the county.

## Student Diversity

Kern schools are ethnically and linguistically diverse, with 43 languages represented by students countywide. During 2004-05, 34,161 students (20.6 percent of total county enrollment) were English learners; another 26,920 students (11.3 percent of total enrollment) were newly designated English-proficient students.

Additionally, 8.4 percent of the county's K-12 enrollment were students with special educational and/or medical needs.

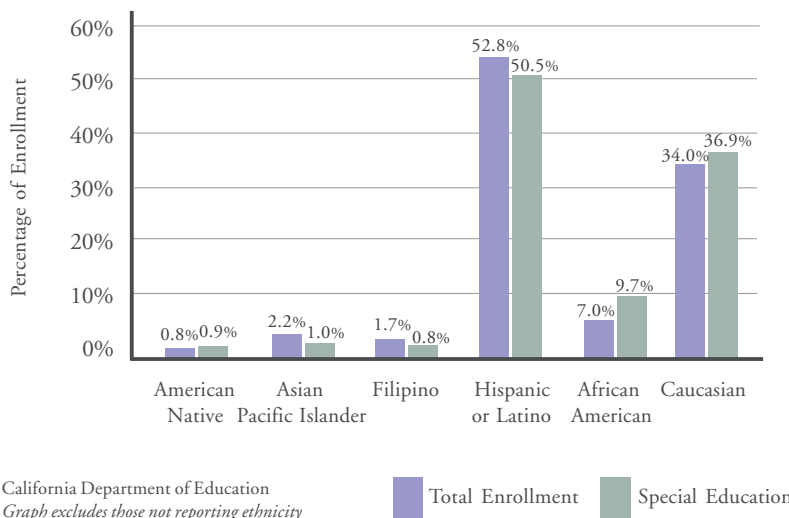


After English and Spanish, Filipino and Punjabi are the next most common languages spoken by Kern County school children. During the 2004-05 school year, about 700 English-learners in grades K-12 spoke each of these languages. Many more were already bilingual.

-- California Department of Education

## Total Enrollment and Special Education Enrollment by Ethnicity

Kern County 2004-05



California Department of Education  
Graph excludes those not reporting ethnicity

## California

3rd Grade Test Scores (CST) Percent "Proficient" or Above	02-03	03-04	04-05
Reading	33%	30%	31%
Mathematics	46%	48%	54%

7th Grade Test Scores (CST) Percent "Proficient" or Above	02-03	03-04	04-05
Reading	36%	36%	43%
Mathematics	30%	33%	37%

Out-of-School Youth Percent of youth ages 16-19 not in school and without high school diploma	2002	2003	2004
American Community Survey, US Census	7.6%	7.3%	6.5%

Graduation Rates Interim graduation rate - see discussion	02-03	03-04	04-05
National Center for Educational Statistics formula	86.7%	85.4%	84.9%

College Prepared Youth	02-03	03-04	04-05
% Grads w/ CSU/UC Require	33.6%	33.7%	35.2%
% 12th Graders Taking SAT	36.7%	35.3%	35.9%

Community Education Levels Percent of all adults 25 and older without at least a high school diploma	2002	2003	2004
American Community Survey, US Census	21.0%	19.8%	19.6%

## Kern County

3rd Grade Test Scores (CST) Percent "Proficient" or Above	02-03	03-04	04-05
Reading	27%	24%	26%
Mathematics	38%	39%	46%

7th Grade Test Scores (CST) Percent "Proficient" or Above	02-03	03-04	04-05
Reading	30%	29%	35%
Mathematics	23%	24%	29%

Out-of-School Youth Percent of youth ages 16-19 not in school and without high school diploma	2002	2003	2004
American Community Survey, US Census	3.2%	7.8%	9.4%

Graduation Rates Interim graduation rate - see discussion	02-03	03-04	04-05
National Center for Educational Statistics formula	84.6%	84.8%	86.0%

College Prepared Youth	02-03	03-04	04-05
% Grads w/ CSU/UC Require	17.9%	19.8%	21.6%
% 12th Graders Taking SAT	22.7%	22.1%	22.1%

Community Education Levels Percent of all adults 25 and older without at least a high school diploma	2002	2003	2004
American Community Survey, US Census	29.4%	27.9%	27.2%



Reading and literacy skills provide students with the keys to lifelong learning. The more students read, the better readers they will become. Every effort should be made both at school and at home to get students to do as much reading as possible.

-- CA Department  
of Education

### **Special Education**

Kern County's Special Education system served 16,145 children and young adults from newborn to age 22 during the 2004-05 school year. Of these students, 1,800 children were under the age of six and 13,981 children were between the ages of six and 17. Additionally, 364 young adult students continued to receive educational and transitional services after the age of 18. Special Education enrollment represented 8.4 percent of the total K-12 enrollment during that year, compared to 9.3 percent statewide.

The key to helping children with special needs meet their fullest potential is early diagnosis and intervention. Early intervention services are designed to promote development of intellectual, physical, emotional and social growth of children as well as provide support and educational opportunities to their families.

The first three years of a child's life are an important time of brain development. The California Department of Education reports that this is the best time to intervene and make the greatest progress in overcoming physical and educational delays. Moreover, early intervention helps to minimize the need for special education and related services once these young children reach elementary school.

## Student Testing

Standardized student testing is only one measure used in today's educational process. Test scores are provided for parents as they track their child's progress in school. Standardized tests also help schools and educators continually improve instructional methods so children have the best opportunity to learn.

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: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The target performance level for all students in California is proficient or above.

### 3rd Grade Reading and Math

In Kern County during the 2004-05 school year, 26 percent of 3rd graders were proficient or above in English Language Arts and 46 percent were proficient or above in Mathematics.

Statewide, 31 percent of 3rd grade students were proficient or above in English Language Arts and 54 percent were proficient or above in Mathematics.

### 7th Grade Reading and Math

In Kern County during the 2004-05 school year, 35 percent of 7th graders were proficient or above in English Language Arts and 29 percent were proficient or above in Mathematics.

Statewide, 43 percent of 7th grade students were proficient or above in English Language Arts and 37 percent were proficient or above in Mathematics.



Senate Bill 1453 now requires each K-12 student in California public schools to have an individual, yet non-personally identifiable, statewide student identifier. This ID will allow the state to comply with federal reporting requirements and will provide a better means of evaluating students' educational progress over time.

-- California Dept of Education

## High School Exit Exam

Although the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) has been given since 2000, the class of 2006 is the first class that may be required to pass the exam in order to receive a high school diploma.

The test is not without controversy, as passing rates vary widely among students of different ethnicity, economic status, and learning ability. However, students are given multiple opportunities throughout high school to pass the exam before graduation.

At this writing, 2005-06 testing is not yet complete. However, a partial year report is available for Kern High School District (KHSD) - the district serving 68 percent of Kern County's high school students. Of all KHSD seniors testing before March 2006, approximately 85 percent had successfully passed the exam. Of the 15 percent not yet passing, some would not have graduated due to incomplete coursework.

## College Preparation

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/University of California system.

In Kern County during 2004-05, 22 percent of students graduated with all “A-G” classes completed. Thirty-five percent of seniors statewide completed these requirements.

Additionally, it is important for students in California to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). In Kern County during 2004-05, 21 percent of 12th graders took the SAT exam. Statewide, 36 percent took the exam.

## Graduation

In Kern County, 9,004 students met graduation requirements during 2004-05. However, the number of students who did not successfully complete graduation requirements is difficult to track.

For many years, the California Department of Education has used a complicated set of policies to determine how many students had “dropped out” of high school. The rates, compiled by high schools statewide, vary widely depending upon interpretation of the policies.

During ongoing “drop out” rate discussions, federal law began requiring more detailed measures of student achievement - including graduation rates. To comply with federal mandates and to better track children within the state educational system, the California Department of Education is implementing a student-level tracking system using unique identification numbers.

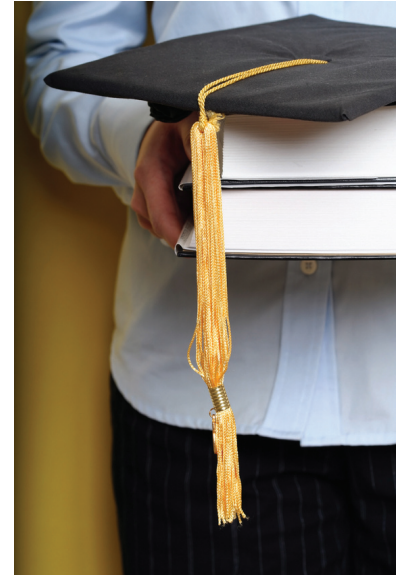
Within a few years, data analysts will be able to track children throughout their school career and know specifically how many graduate. Until then, the state is reporting county-level rates based upon a formula used by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

In Kern County during 2004-05, an estimated 86 percent of seniors graduated high school. In California, an estimated 85 percent graduated.

DATA SOURCES:

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

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



Nationwide, more women than men attend college. In Fall 2005, 66 percent of students enrolled at California State University Bakersfield were women.

-- California State University



All of us have a role and responsibility to promote the health of the next generation of Californians. All babies deserve a healthy start in life, and we are committed to improving the health and well-being of mothers and their children.

-- Dr. Mark Horton, California State Public Health Officer



# HEALTH INDICATORS

## Prenatal Care

Women who begin prenatal care early in their pregnancy can have babies with better health outcomes. In Kern County, the three-year (2002-2004) average early prenatal care rate was 75.9 per 1,000 live births. In California overall, the rate was 78.3.

## Prematurity and Low Birth Weight

The leading causes of infant death are prematurity and low birth weight. During 2004, 13,455 babies were born in Kern County. Of those with a reported gestation period, 13.6 percent were born prior to 37 weeks - the point which defines prematurity. Statewide, 10.9 percent were premature.

Newborns have a low birth weight when they weigh less than 5.5 pounds. Many very small babies are premature, but not all. The three-year (2002-2004) average percentage of low-weight births in Kern County was 6.8 percent. By comparison, the three-year average was 6.6 percent for all live births in California.

## Births to Young Mothers

Babies born to women under the age of 20 are at greater risk of birth complications. The three-year (2002-2004) average rate for births to adolescent mothers in Kern County was 64.4 per 1,000 live births. This was the fourth highest rate among California counties. Although the pregnancy rate for adolescents aged 15 to 19 in Kern County was significantly higher than the state overall (39.2), rates have fallen dramatically over the past decade.

## Breastfeeding

The 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 (2002-2004) average breastfeeding rate in Kern County was 790.0 per 1,000 live births. This was the fourth lowest rate of all California counties. Statewide, the breastfeeding rate was 830.7 per 1,000.

## Infant Death

The three-year (2001-2003) average mortality rate for infants in Kern County was 6.0 per 1,000 live births. This figure was higher than the California three-year average rate of 5.3. Nationwide, African-American infants die more frequently than those of other race/ethnicity. In Kern County, the three-year (2001-2003) average mortality rates for African-American infants was 14.8; in California the figure was 11.6.

### DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs/OHIR/tables/>

California Department of Health Services, County Health Status Profiles  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs/OHIR/reports/healthstatusprofiles/2006/profiles.pdf>

National Center for Health Statistics  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/teenbrth.htm>



Health care providers used to think babies should sleep on their stomachs, but research now shows that babies are less likely to die of SIDS when they sleep on their backs.

-- National Institute of Health

Late or No Prenatal Care (Percentage of those reporting)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	2.6%	2.4%	3.3%
California	2.6%	2.5%	2.6%

Overweight Youth (Percentage of 5 <sup>th</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> grade)	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Kern County	34.2%	35.0%	36.4%
California	33.2%	33.0%	33.3%

Premature Births (Percentage of live births)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	11.5%	12.6%	13.6%
California	10.5%	10.7%	10.9%

Chlamydia Infection in Youth (Rate per 100,000 females 15-19)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	3034.4	3434.4	3274.4
California	2233.1	2217.0	2227.6

Births to Teen Mothers 15-19 (Percentage of live births)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	15.1%	14.7%	14.7%
California	9.5%	9.1%	9.1%

Infant Mortality Rate - 3yr avg (Rate per 1,000 live births)	1999 - 2001	2000 - 2002	2001 - 2003
Kern County (All Races)	7.2	6.8	6.0
California (All Races)	5.5	5.5	5.3
Kern County (African-American)	20.0	14.8	12.9
California (African-American)	11.9	11.6	11.2

Births to Teen Mothers 15-19 (Rate per 1,000 live births)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	63.8	64.0	65.8
California	40.6	38.9	38.1
United States	43.0	41.6	n/a

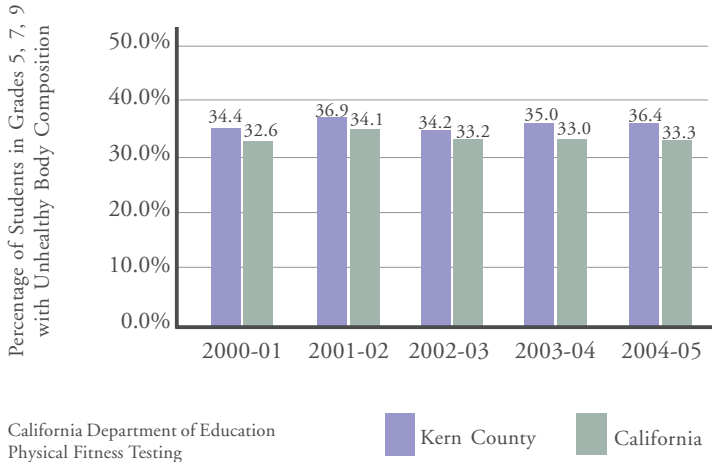
Total Kern County Births (2004)	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pac Islander	Native American	Total *
Number of Live Births	689	4,193	7,886	453	69	13,455
Percentage of Total Births	5.1%	31.2%	58.6%	3.4%	.1%	100%

Kern County Births to Teens 15-19 (2003)	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pac Islander	Native American	Total *
Number of Live Births	144	447	1,246	18	10	1,893
Teen Birth Rate per 1,000 Births	75.8	36.6	92.9	16.4	26.0	64.0

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

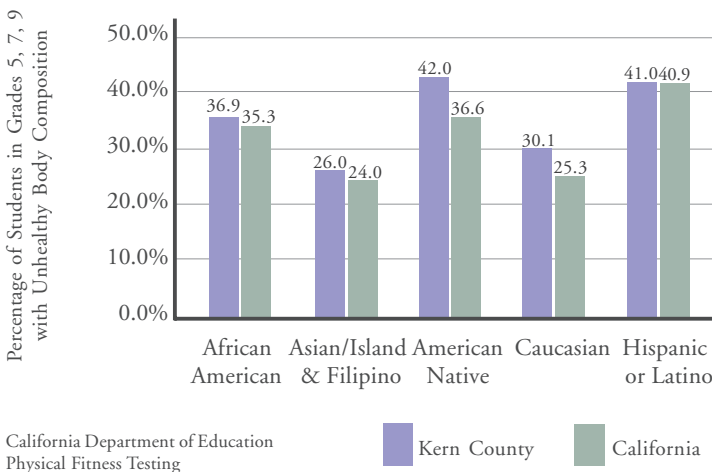
## Unhealthy Body Composition of Students 2000-01 through 2004-05

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



## Unhealthy Body Composition of Students by Ethnicity 2004-05

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



## Childhood Obesity

Recently, much attention has been focused on obesity in children. Many studies have shown that children who are overweight have more health difficulties throughout life.

A healthy lifestyle — increasing physical activity, achieving a healthy weight, improving nutrition, avoiding tobacco use, and avoiding sun overexposure — can significantly reduce an adult’s risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. Yet, these behaviors are not easy to change for adults. For best lifelong health, good nutrition and activity habits must begin in childhood.

Good fitness in children is also important for educational outcomes. In 2002, a California Department of Education study found that higher student achievement was associated with higher levels of fitness at each of the three grade levels measured, particularly in mathematics.

In Kern County during 2005, 36,148 students in 5th, 7th, and 9th grades completed California Physical Fitness Testing. Among these students, 35.4 percent had unhealthy body composition based on individual Body Mass Index (BMI) scores. Since the test’s BMI measure for “healthy” includes very lean body masses, the majority of these students were overweight.

A review of physical fitness testing by ethnicity and gender indicates more than 40 percent of American Native and Hispanic/Latino children in Kern County had unhealthy body composition. Also, on average, boys had poorer body composition than girls.

Regarding childhood activity levels, the 2001 California Health Interview Survey found 40.8 percent of Kern County youth aged 12 to 17 did not engage in vigorous activity as least three days per week. Statewide, the figure was 36.7 percent.



During 2004, 630 children in Kern County were discharged after an asthma-related hospitalization.

## Asthma

Asthma is prevalent in Central Valley counties and is often attributed to agriculture-generated dust, a heavy trucking corridor, rapid population growth, and the physical geography of the southern Valley. According to the 2003 California Health Interview Survey conducted by UCLA, 17.8 percent of children in Kern County had been diagnosed with asthma during their lifetime. Statewide, the figure was 14.8 percent.

## Health Insurance

The California Health Interview Survey also asks many questions about health insurance because it is an important predictor of regular medical care. Parents were asked if their children had been covered by health insurance for the entire previous twelve months. Using this measure, 10.5 percent of Kern County children did not have coverage for the entire previous year. Statewide, the figure was 7.6 percent.

## 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 2006 County Health Status Profile, Kern County has the second highest rate of Chlamydia cases among California counties. In 2004, the rate of diagnosed infection in females of all ages was 756.1 per 100,000. For males, the rate was 275.5 per 100,000. By comparison, California rates were 486.9 and 184.0 for females and males, respectively.

Chlamydia rates are especially prevalent in sexually active females aged 15 to 19. In Kern County, the 2004 rate for this population was 3,274.4 per 100,000. This rate is significantly higher than the California rate of 2,227.6 for females aged 15 to 19.

### DATA SOURCES:

California Department of Education  
<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr02/yr02rel37.asp>

California Department of Health Services  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs/OHIR/tables/>  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/dcdc/STD/datayears.htm>  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs/OHIR/reports/healthstatusprofiles/2006/profiles.pdf>

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

# SAFETY INDICATORS

## Child Abuse and Neglect Overview

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.

Substantiated cases are those that have been fully investigated and the situation is found to meet specific state criteria for abuse or neglect. Both referral and substantiated rates are tracked closely by county and state officials.

It is important to note that 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.

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.

In approximately 2/3 of cases, families work with family maintenance workers to keep their children at home; in the remaining 1/3 of cases children must be removed from their home.

Key child abuse and neglect information for the State of California is housed at 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 2005, Quarter 3 Extract unless otherwise noted.



It's a sad irony that many abusers genuinely love their children, but they find themselves caught in life situations beyond their control and they do not know how to cope. They are often isolated from friends and family and may have no one to give them emotional support. They may not like themselves and may not know how to get their emotional needs met.

-- National Committee  
for the Prevention of Child Abuse

## CPS Referral Rates

In 2004, 15,617 referrals were made to Kern County's Child Protective Services (CPS), indicating a referral rate of 70.8 per 1,000 children. This figure is 38 percent higher than the statewide referral rate of 51.3 during the same year.

Kern County's 2004 referral rate is at its lowest point in four years. Additionally, the percentage difference between state and county rates is at its lowest in four years.

Of the 15,617 referrals, 26.4 percent became substantiated cases. All other referrals were inconclusive, unfounded, or evaluated-out during the CPS investigation. Statewide, 22.6 percent of referred cases were substantiated.

## Child Abuse Rates

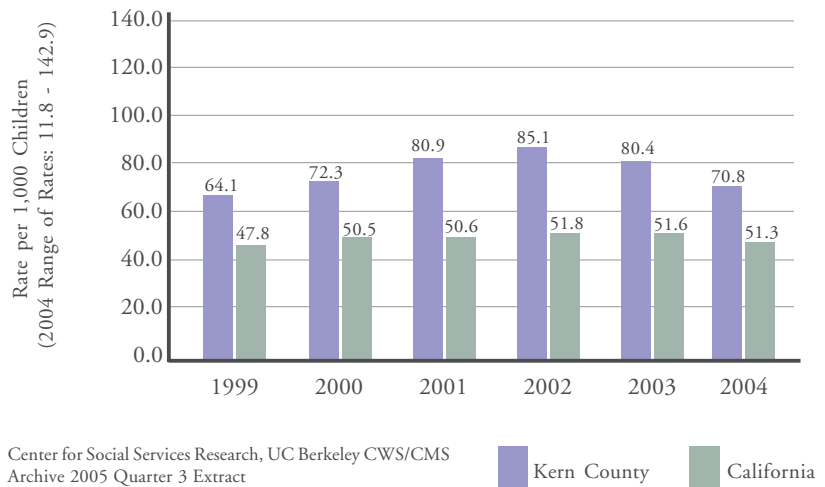
In 2004, 4,125 referred cases were substantiated in Kern County, indicating a child abuse rate of 18.7 per 1,000 children. This rate is 61 percent higher than the state rate of 11.6 during the same year.

Following the trend of county referral rates, Kern County's 2004 child abuse rate is at its lowest point in four years and the percentage difference between state and county rates is at its lowest in four years.

Child abuse rates in California counties ranged from 4.3 to 51.3 during 2004.

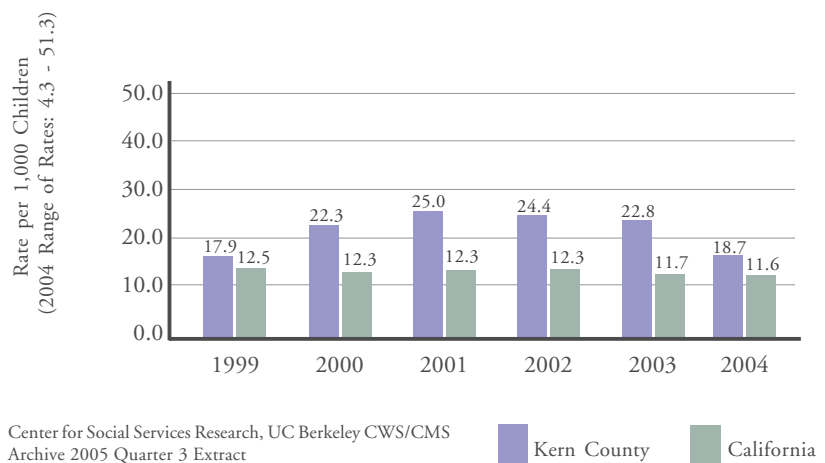
## CPS Referral Rates 1999-2004

Kern County and California



## Child Abuse Rates 1999-2004

Kern County and California





These kids want a bed; they want to know that they're going to eat every day; they want to know that someone loves them.

-- Kern Foster Parent

## Foster Care

Of the 4,125 children living in neglect or abuse in Kern County during 2004, 1,352 were placed into foster care. The rate is 6.1 per 1,000 children and represents 32.8 percent of the substantiated cases. By comparison, California has a removal rate of 3.5 per 1,000 children representing 30.6 percent of substantiated cases statewide.

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, 2005, 2,696 children were in foster care in Kern County. Of these, 12.2 percent were African American, 39.5 percent were Caucasian, and 46.9 percent were Hispanic/Latino; Native American and Asian/Islander children each made up less than 1.0 percent.

Based upon the number of children in foster care and the population estimate of each ethnicity, a foster care prevalence rate can be calculated. In both Kern County and California, African American children are more prevalent in the foster care system than other children.

CPS Referral Rates per 1,000 Children	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	85.1	80.4	70.8
California	51.8	51.6	51.3

Substantiated Child Abuse Rates per 1,000 Children	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	24.4	22.8	18.7
California	12.3	11.7	11.6

Foster Care Rates per 1,000 Children (Entry + Re-Entry)	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	7.0	6.8	6.1
California	3.6	3.5	3.5

Percentage of CPS Referrals Substantiated	2002	2003	2004
Kern County	28.7%	28.3%	26.4%
California	23.7%	22.6%	22.6%

California Recurrent Child Abuse	Base Number 2004	3 mo	6 mo
% with new substantiated abuse after 3 and 6 months	68,660	4.8%	7.3%

Kern County Recurrent Child Abuse	Base Number 2004	3 mo	6 mo
% with new substantiated abuse after 3 and 6 months	2,782	4.5%	7.8%

Substantiated Child Abuse Rates (2004)	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pac Islander	Native American	Total
Kern County	23.5	24.6	15.1	3.6	7.7	18.7
California	23.3	10.6	11.5	4.2	16.0	11.6

Substantiated Child Abuse Rates (2004)	Under 1	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-18 yrs
Kern County	53.7	24.6	21.4	18.0	13.0	7.4
California	23.5	12.5	12.7	11.9	10.0	6.8

Foster Care Prevalence Rate (Children in care on 7/1/05)	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pac Islander	Native American	Total
Kern County	21.8	13.9	10.0	2.2	6.6	11.5
California	31.8	6.7	6.8	1.8	12.1	7.9



## Reunification

Returning children safely to their home is the primary goal of Child Protective Services. An outcome measure that reflects permanency and stability is the rate of reunification.

During 2003, 1,145 children entered Kern County foster care and stayed more than four days. Of these, 360 (31.4 percent) reunified with family within twelve months. Statewide, 37.4 percent were reunited within twelve months.

Historically, about 31 percent of foster children are still in care after two years.

## Recurrence

Even when reunification is initially successful, some children must be placed again into foster care when another abuse event occurs. Of all children entering foster care for the first time during 2002, 10.4 percent of those who reunified within twelve months returned to care during the following year. The rate in California was 13.0 percent.

During 2004, 145 cases were closed following family reunification services. Of these children, 2.1 percent had a subsequent abuse occurrence within three months and 3.4 percent had subsequent abuse within six months.

## Preserved Family Relationships

For those children remaining in foster care for lengthy periods of time, the preservation of natural family relationships is very important. Whenever possible, sibling units are placed in the same foster home.

On July 1, 2005, a total of 1,974 sibling groups were in foster care in Kern County. Of these, 34.4 percent were placed together with all siblings and 26.9 percent were placed with at least some siblings. The figures for California were 44.7 percent placed all together and 22.5 with at least some siblings.

## 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.

Because the transition from foster care to adulthood is very difficult, the Department of Human Services offers an Independent Living Program (ILP) to qualifying foster youth ages 16 and older.

In Kern County during the period October 2004 through September 2005, 745 foster youth were offered ILP services and 62.1 percent accepted those services. Statewide, 69.8 percent of those offered ILP services accept them.

Of the students receiving Independent Living Program services, 23.1 percent were parenting their own children, 15.3 percent graduated or completed high school equivalency, 14.9 percent were enrolled in college, and 21.8 percent were employed.

### 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/>



Nationally, about 20,000 youth each year age out of foster care and are on their own, often with limited family ties.

-- Network on Transitions to Adulthood



Wearing a helmet during a bicycle fall reduces the risk of head injury by 85 percent. By law, children under the age of 18 must always wear a bicycle helmet when riding.

-- California Department of Health Services, EPIC

<b>Submersion / Drowning</b> (Number of children 0-17 killed or injured)	2002	2003	2004
Fatal Injury	2	1	6
Non-Fatal Hospitalization	8	11	13

<b>Assault/Homicide</b> (Number of children 0-17 killed or injured)	2002	2003	2004
Fatal Injury	3	6	3
Non-Fatal Hospitalization	30	40	41

<b>Motor Vehicle Related</b> (Number of children 0-17 killed or injured)	2002	2003	2004
Fatal Injury	15	30	9
Non-Fatal Hospitalization	130	160	179

<b>Domestic Violence</b> (Calls for Assistance to Law Enforcement)	2002	2003	2004
Number of Calls	3,196	3,532	3,394
Rate per 100,000 pop.	458.5	492.4	456.0

<b>Self-Inflicted Injury / Suicide</b> (Number of children 0-17 killed or injured)	2002	2003	2004
Fatal Injury	2	2	2
Non-Fatal Hospitalization	25	29	36

<b>Crime Rates</b> (Number of crimes per 100,000 pop)	2002	2003	2004
Violent Crimes	483.6	521.7	594.0
Property Crimes	1,994.4	2,225.1	2,395.3

## Missing Children

According to the California Office of the Attorney General, “a missing person is someone whose whereabouts is unknown to the reporting party. This includes any child who may have run away, been taken involuntary or may be in need of assistance. It also includes a child illegally taken, held or hidden by a parent or non-parent family member.”

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. These figures include children who were lost or had run away, were taken by strangers or family, or were victims of catastrophe or suspicious/unknown circumstances. Annual statistics from the Missing Persons System are based on report cancellations during the same year the initial missing persons report was made.

During 2004, 4,261 children were reported missing in Kern County. During the same year, a total of 4,025 missing person reports were canceled: 3,154 children were returned, 649 were located, 104 were arrested, 3 were deceased, and 145 were removed from the system for other reasons; 236 children remained missing at year end.

## Child Injury

During 2004, 636 children in Kern County were hospitalized for accidental injury. Additionally, 24 children died from accidental injuries.

In both county and state, the most common nonfatal accidental injuries among children are fall-related. Twenty-five percent of Kern County’s hospitalizations for injury were due to falls. Most fatal accidents among children in Kern County were automobile and drowning-related.

## Seat Belts and Impaired Driving

The California Health Interview Survey conducted by UCLA, asks many health and behavior questions of children and adolescents.

The 2001 Survey found that 25 percent of Kern’s youth population aged 12-17 did not always wear seatbelts and 29 percent had, in the past, ridden with a driver that had been drinking. Statewide these figures were 21 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

### DATA SOURCES:

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

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

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



There is no waiting period for reporting a person missing. All California police and sheriff’s departments must accept any report, including a report by telephone, of a missing person, including runaways, without delay and will give priority to the handling of the report.

-- California Attorney General



True supervision of children means an adult is *actively* watching them whenever water is near. This “line of sight” supervision can make the difference between play and tragedy.

-- Safe Kids USA

## Water Safety

Nationwide, drowning is the second-leading cause of injury related death among children under age 14. During 2004, six drowning and 13 near-drowning episodes happened in Kern County.

Adults often believe they are supervising children properly. However, a recent Safe Kids USA study found that 88 percent of drownings occur when an adult believes they are supervising the child. Even when parents believed they were supervising their children properly, they admitted to talking with other adults, reading, eating, or talking on the phone.

Emergency rescue officials warn all adults and children to stay out of the Kern River. During 2005, at least 13 individuals drowned in the Kern River and Lake Isabella.

## Firearms and Gang Activity

The 2001 California Health Interview Survey asked adolescents statewide if they had ever handled a firearm without supervision. In Kern County, 7.1 percent of adolescents had handled a gun without adult supervision. In California, the figure was 4.6 percent.

The California Health Kids Survey, taken biannually by students, asks health and behavior questions. The survey is given to most 7th, 9th, and 11th graders throughout the state.

When asked if they had ever belonged to a gang, 12 percent of Kern County 7th grade and 9th grade students said “yes”. The figure was slightly lower (11 percent) among 11th grade students. Among students served in Kern’s nontraditional continuation schools, 39 percent indicated gang involvement.

### DATA SOURCES:

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

California Healthy Kids Survey  
[http://www.wested.org/pub/docs/chks\\_home.html](http://www.wested.org/pub/docs/chks_home.html)

Safe Kids USA  
<http://www.usa.safekids.org/>

## Child Death

Each county's Child Death Review Team (CDRT) plays a critical role in identifying the causes and circumstances surrounding child deaths. This knowledge is then used to design prevention strategies to prevent further fatalities.

During 2005, Kern County's CDRT investigated 58 child deaths that met the coroner's review criteria. Twenty-two of the reviewed deaths, or 38 percent of the cases, were infants under age one.

Among these infants, the most common causes of death were pneumonia, asphyxia (adult co-sleeping), and respiratory arrest. These accounted for 64 percent of the reviewed infant deaths. Other causes of death included prematurity, dehydration, aspiration, other health related causes, and motor vehicle accidents.

Kern's CDRT investigated 36 deaths of children aged one to 18. The most common cause of death among these children were automobile accidents. Eleven children in Kern County died in motor vehicles during 2005 and all were unrestrained. Two additional children died because of an ATV/motorcycle accident and as a pedestrian. In total, 39 percent of these reviewed deaths were related to vehicles.

In 2005, homicide accounted for six deaths among children (5 gun shots and 1 stabbing) and drowning was cause of death for five children. The remaining deaths were related to suicide, trauma, carbon monoxide poisoning, and other medical causes.

DATA SOURCE:

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

## Domestic Violence

During 2004, Kern County law enforcement officers recorded 3,394 calls for assistance in domestic violence situations, a rate of 456.0 calls per 100,000 population.

Of all Kern County calls for assistance during 2004, 10 percent involved the use of firearms, knives, or other dangerous weapons. Another 56 percent involved personal weapons, such as hands, fists, or feet. In total, two-thirds of all calls for assistance involved weapons.

## Crime Rates

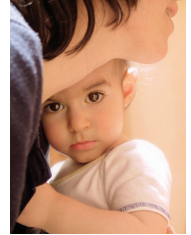
For the first time in a decade, Kern County's most recent violent crime rate is higher than the violent crime rate of California. During 2004, Kern's violent crime rate was 594.0 per 100,000 population. Statewide the rate was 539.6 per 100,000. The rate of violent crime in Kern County is also at its highest point since 1997.

Property crime rates for the county are also at the highest point since 1997. During 2004, Kern's property crime rate was 2,395.4 per 100,000 population. California's rate was 1,946.4.

Juvenile felony arrest rates have declined over the past decade in Kern County, although they also tend to be higher than rates statewide. Kern's 2004 juvenile felony arrest rate of 1513.7 per 100,000 youth at the lowest point since 1995. California's rate was 1,345.2 per 100,000.

DATA SOURCE:

California Department of Justice  
[http://stats.doj.ca.gov/cjsc\\_stats/prof04/index.htm](http://stats.doj.ca.gov/cjsc_stats/prof04/index.htm)



Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to have behavioral and health problems including anxiety, depression, and violence toward peers. They are also more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol and attempt suicide as adolescents.

-- Family Violence  
Prevention Fund

## 2006 COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES



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

Since 1992, Kern County communities have partnered together as Community Collaboratives to better care for children and families. Nineteen 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.

### Accredited Community Collaboratives

Arvin	Arvin Collaborative and FRC .....	661.854.6526
Bakersfield	34th Street Collaborative .....	661.326.3051
	East Bakersfield Community Coalition and CRC .....	661.631.5878
	Fairfax/Brundage Neighborhood Partnership .....	661.331.8143
	Greenfield H.E.L.P.S. Collaborative and FRC .....	661.837.3720
	South Chester Collaborative and FRC .....	661.631.5945
	Southeast Neighborhood Partnership and FRC .....	661.322.3276
Buttonwillow	Buttonwillow Collaborative and CRC .....	661.764.9405
California City	California City Collaborative .....	760.824.7517
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
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 Collaborative and FRC .....	661.746.8690
Taft Area	Greater Westside Collaborative and CRC .....	661.765.7281
Wasco	Wasco Collaborative .....	661.720.5835
Kern County	Richardson Special Needs Collaborative and FRC .....	661.336.5482

### Other Community Collaboratives

Delano	Delano Neighborhood Partnership and CRC .....	661.721.7036
Bakersfield	Oildale Collaborative and FRCs	
	Standard Healthy Start .....	661.392.2163
	Neighborhood Place .....	661.392.2054

# 2006 GOVERNING BOARD

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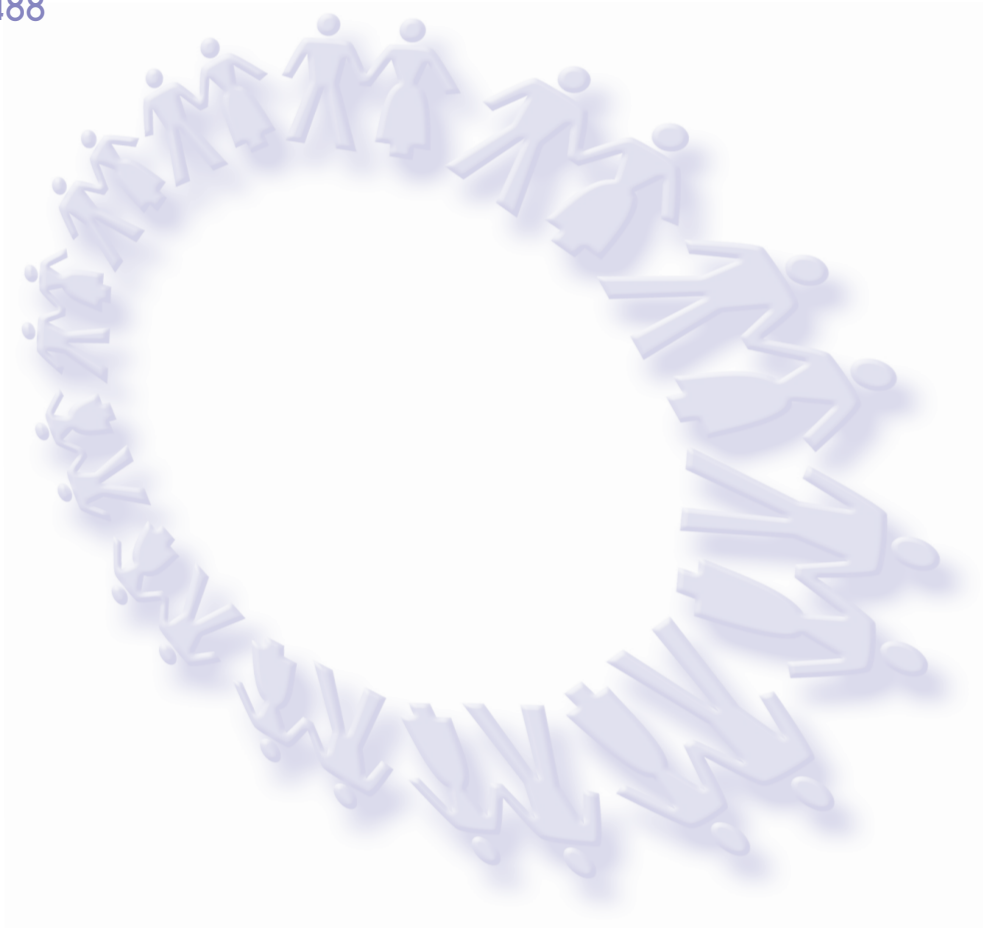
THOMAS J. CORSON  
Executive Director, Kern  
County Network for Children

BERNARD C. BARMANN  
KCNC Legal Counsel, Office  
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LOCAL COMMUNITIES WORKING IN COLLABORATION