



Kern County Network for Children

Our Children. Our Community.

Important Facts About Kern's Children 2020



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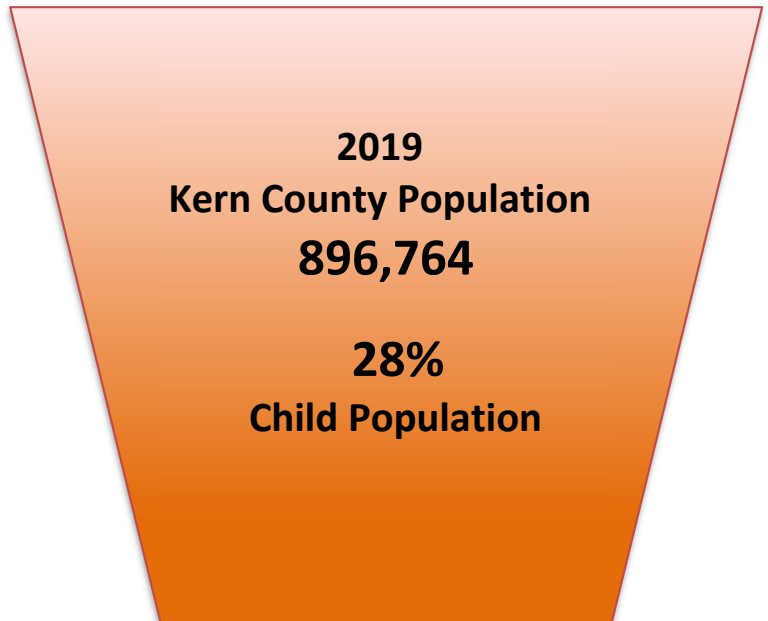
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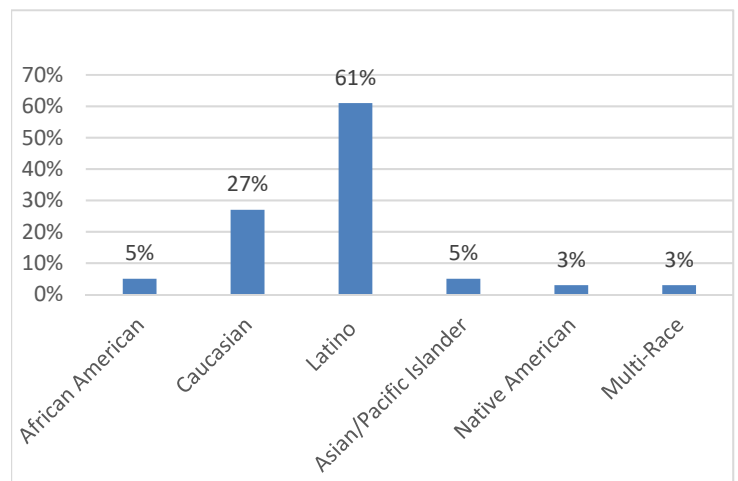
Kern County Children & Families

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

- **Kern County continues to be one of the youngest counties in the state.** Kern County's child population in 2020 was 253,010. Children represented 28% of the county population. 31% of Kern County children were under age 6 years old.
- **Latino children made up the largest racial/ethnic group among Kern's child population.** In 2020, 61% of Kern County children were Latino and 27% were Caucasian. According to 2018 population data, 5% of Kern's children were African American, 13% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% were multi-cultural and less than 3% were Native American.
- **A small percentage of Kern County children were born outside the United States.** In 2016, 5.4% of children under age 18 living in Kern County were born outside the United States.
- **Students in Kern County public schools are linguistically diverse.** In 2016, 41,179 (23% of total county enrollment) were English Learners. Spanish was the most commonly-spoken language after English.
- **Nearly half of all Kern County households were raising children in 2017.** In Kern County, 43.3% of all Kern County households had children under age 18 years. This figure includes married-couple households 59% and 27% of children are in households were single mothers raising children and nine percent were being raised by single fathers.
- **U.S. Census Bureau four-year estimates showed that from 2016, 43% of Kern County children ages 0-17 lived with one or more foreign-born parents.**
- **According to 2017 estimates, 4% of Kern County grandparents were responsible for the care of grandchildren under 18.**



Child Population by Race/Ethnicity Kern County, 2020



**Percent in Child Population Change in
Kern:
2018 To 2019
1.1% Decrease**

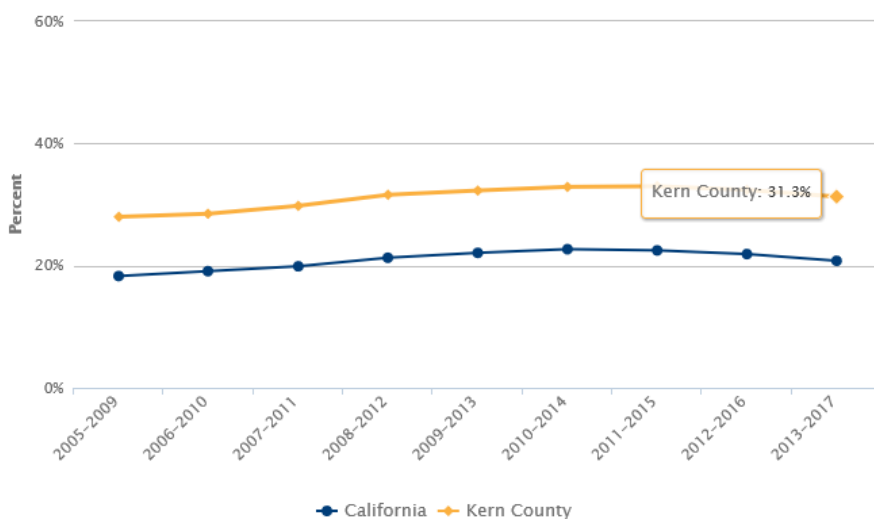
Children Live in Economically-Secure Families

Prior to the pandemic, Kern County had made some improvements in reducing rates of unemployment and poverty in recent years. Poverty is a powerful factor in child development and a child's likelihood of living in poverty varies by age, race/ethnicity, and family structure. The pandemic, within a few months, more than doubled previous years unemployment rates, creating increased stress to Kern families.

- **Kern County's average annual unemployment rate decreased last year, but increased substantially in 2020 due to Covid-19.** Kern County's average annual unemployment increased substantially from 8% in June 2019 to 17.5% in June 2020, according to the California Employment Development Department.
- **Median family income in Kern County rose in 2017, but remains far below the state level.** The median income of Kern County families raising children increased to \$48,878 in 2017, but was 36% less than the state (\$76,912). Median family income varies by family structure.
- **One out of every four Kern families were poor, with single-mother families the most vulnerable.** In 2017, 29.3% of Kern County families were raising their children with incomes below the poverty line, compared to 17.6% in California.
- **Nearly one in three Kern children lived in poverty during 2017; 1.5 times higher than the State average.** An estimated 79,192 children in Kern County lived below the poverty line during 2017, a rate of 31.3%. By comparison, California's 2017 child poverty rate was at 20.8%.
- **More than one out of every three Kern County children lived in households on Federal Aid Programs.** During 2016, 35% of Kern County children live in households with Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash public assistance income, or Food Stamp/SNAP benefits, compared to 25% of California children.
- **More than half of Kern County renters were cost burdened.** In 2017, 40% of renters spent 30% or more of their income on housing costs in Kern County. According to 2017 estimates, Kern renters must earn \$17.88/ hour working a 40-hour week to afford a two-bedroom apartment. A minimum wage worker in Kern County must work 60 hours per week to afford rent for a two bedroom rental unit.
- **More than 131,852 Kern County students were eligible for free or reduced price meals at their schools.** During the 2019 school year, an average of 73.1% of students across all school districts participated in their school's free/reduced meal program.

Source: American Community Survey December 2018

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

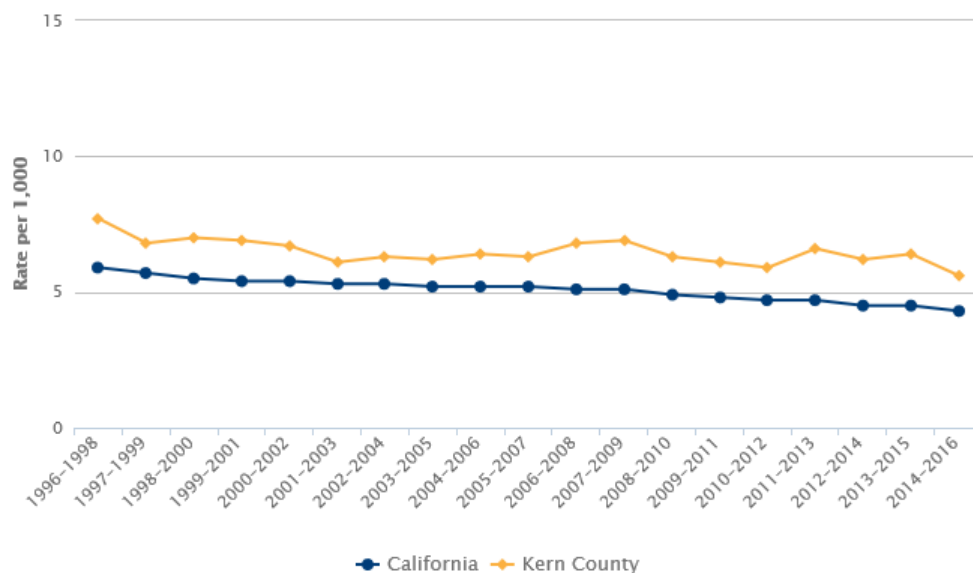


Children Have Healthy Beginnings

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

- **More Kern County women received prenatal care in the first trimester.** The percentage of Kern County women receiving prenatal care in their first was 77.5% in 2016. By comparison, California's 2016 rate was 84%.
- **A higher rate of babies were born with a low birth weight.** The percent of Kern County babies born with a low birth weight, 7.5% in 2016, with 1.2% of births with very low birth weight. This important infant health indicator for Kern County was higher than California's overall average, which was 6.9%, with 1.1% of infants born with very low birth weight.
- **Kern's three year average infant mortality rate decreased from the previous year average.** Kern's three-year (2014-16) average infant mortality rate decreased slightly to 5.6 infants per 1,000 live births from the 2013-15 average of 6.8. Kern's rate was higher than California's overall rate of 4.3 infants per 1,000 live births.
- **Sleep environment can mean life or death for Kern County infants.** In 2018, the Kern County Child Death Review Team reported there was 1 infant death linked to an unsafe sleeping environment.
- **The percentage of Kern kindergartners receiving all required immunizations continues to remain in line with California's rate.** In 2019, 91.1% of Kern County kindergartners entered school with all required immunizations. The California average is 94.8%.
- **9 out of every 10 Kern children had health insurance.** In 2017, 97% of Kern's children under age 18 had health insurance, a figure slightly higher than the State rate of 96.9%.
- **Just 25% of Kern County students in grade seven met all fitness standards of physical fitness in the "Healthy Fitness Zone" in 2018.** This represents levels of fitness that offer protection against diseases resulting from sedentary living.

Infant Mortality Rate: 1996-1998 to 2014-2016



Source: American Community Survey December 2018

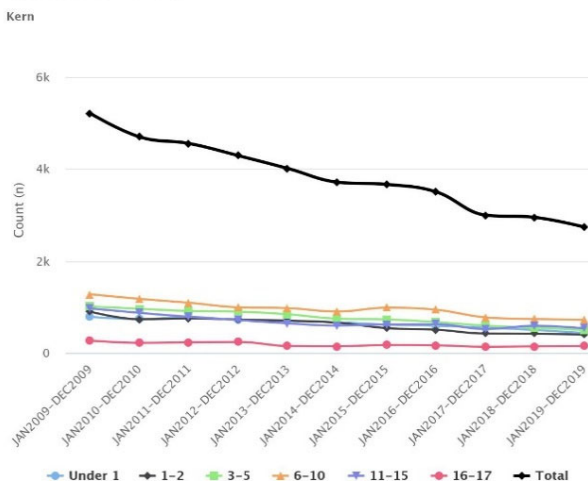
Definition: Number of deaths among children under age 1 per 1,000 live births (e.g., in 2014-16, there were 4.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in California).

Children Live in Safe and Stable Families

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

- **During 2019, 41 children each day were referred to CPS with allegations of child abuse and neglect in Kern County.** Kern County recorded allegations of abuse and neglect for 15,079 children in 2019, a rate of 59.1 children per 1,000 children, compared to California's rate of 52.6 children.
- **In 2019, an average of 8 Kern County children were victims of maltreatment each day.** In 2019, 2,741 children, 11.5 per 1,000, ages 0-17, were victims of abuse or neglect in Kern County. Kern's substantiated child maltreatment rate fell from 13.8 per 1,000 children in 2016, to 10.8 in 2019. Despite its sustained improvement, Kern's substantiated child abuse/neglect rate remains above the California's rate of 9.4 per 1,000 children.
- **As in prior years, neglect is still the most common form of maltreatment in Kern County. Among substantiated victims in 2018,** 88% were neglected - meaning a caretaker failed to provide for the child's basic needs, 3% were physically abused, 2% were sexually abused, and 0.1% emotional abuse and 4% experienced caretaker absence or incapacity. The remaining percentage includes a child being at risk or having had a sibling who was abused.
- **Children of all ages experience abuse and neglect, but the youngest children are the most vulnerable.** In 2019, 435 infants were the victims of child abuse or neglect in Kern County, a rate of 34.8 per 1,000 infants. When compared to other race/ethnic groups, African American children experienced the highest rate of child maltreatment in Kern County with 20.4 per 1,000.
- **The highest rate of fatal child abuse/neglect continue to be among the youngest children in Kern County.** In 2019, there were 2 child fatalities due to abuse or neglect of which were determined by law enforcement or the Coroner; and 14 severe/serious injuries due to abuse or neglect.
- **The rate of Kern County children entering foster care due to abuse or neglect decreased from previous year.** During 2019, 705 children were removed from their family home and placed in an out-of-home placement in order to ensure child safety. The rate of children entering foster care was 2.8 per 1,000 children in 2019, fewer than the 2018 rate of 3.4 per 1,000.
- **Number of Kern County children and youth living in foster care remained steady in 2019.** The number of children and youth in foster care decreased from 1,467 in 2018 to 1,450 in 2019 or 5.7 per 1,000.
- **Fewer Kern children who exited the Kern County foster care system re-enter into foster care after a year.** Of all Kern County children exited from foster care during 2019, 87.5% did not re-enter foster care 12 months from the date of the earliest discharge to reunification or guardianship, compared to 88.8% statewide.

California Child Population (0-17) and Children with Child Maltreatment Substantiations
Children with Substantiations



Kern County Child Maltreatment Substantiations 2008-2018 by age group
Total = 2,741

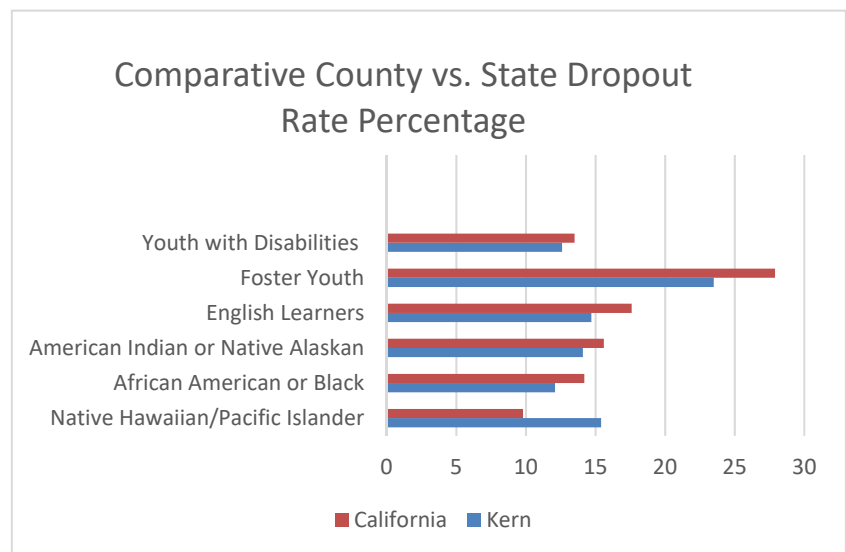
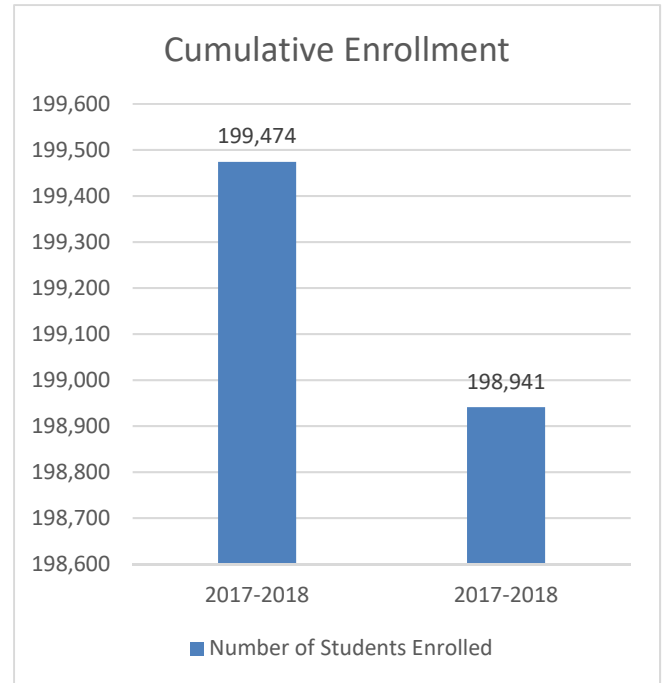
Source: cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb/childwelfare

Students Succeed in School

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

- **Kern's K-12 public school enrollment decreased during the 2019-20 academic year.** Public school enrollment countywide was 198,910 students in the 2019-20 school year. The County's 264 public schools enrolled 533 fewer students than the previous year's count.
- **Nearly three-fourths of Kern's K-12 public school enrollment were considered economically disadvantaged.** During the 2019-20 school year, 72.6% of Kern students were considered economically disadvantaged.
- **Kern County California Assessment of Student Performance & Progress Scores dip.** Across all grades, 43% of Kern County students in 2018-19, compared to 42% in 2017-18, met or exceeded the English language arts/literacy standard and 29% met or exceeded the mathematics standard compared to California's overall rates of 51% and 40%, respectively. As with past standardized tests, sharp differences emerged in county scores of students from low-income families, English learners, Special Education students, and African-American and Latino students compared to other students.
- **Despite improvement, some student populations continue to experience above average dropout rates.** Kern County students with the highest dropout rates included foster youth students 23.5%, students with disabilities 12.6%, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 15.4%, English Learner students 14.7%, and Migrant 10.9%.
- **Kern County high school graduates meeting entrance requirements for UC/CSU systems increases.** In the 2018-19 school year, the number of students graduating with all "A-G" classes completed increased 1.1 percent from 2017-18 with a total of 4,701 students completing the requirements for UC/CSU admission.

Source: California Department of Education



For more information go to: