Assessing the well-being of U.S. children

The success of the nation depends in large part on how well families and society care for children so that they become healthy and productive adults.

WHAT DID WE EXAMINE?

We collected and analyzed federal data in three categories:

- Family, physical, and social environment
- Physical and mental health
- Early care and education

WHAT DID WE FIND?

1. In recent years, the well-being of U.S. children has:
   - worsened in some areas
   - remained constant in some areas
   - improved in others

2. Well-being continues to be generally worse for children who are:
   - minority
   - poor
   - from families headed by single mothers

BELOW ARE SOME OF OUR SPECIFIC FINDINGS.

How precise are these results? Data ranges represented by or indicate 95% confidence intervals. These mean that if agencies were to survey the entire population, there is a 95% chance that the result would be within the interval.

**Student Homelessness**

**Trend**

- Increase in number of students schools identify as homeless

**2014-15 Snapshot:**

>950,000 homeless students: “doubled-up” (living with others)

>95,000 homeless students: unaccompanied (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian)

**School Crime and Safety**

**Trend**

Decrease in rate of theft and violent crimes at school per 1,000 students age 12-18

**2016 Snapshot:**

- Rate of theft per 1,000 students: 26.1
- Rate of violent crime per 1,000 students: 2.2

**Access to Insurance**

**Trend**

Percentage of children uninsured declined by about half

**2015 Snapshot:**

- Among those considered “near poor,” a higher percentage lacked insurance.
- Percentage of children without insurance by percentage of the federal poverty level:
  - Less than 100%
  - 100-199%
  - 200% or more

**Alcohol, Smoking, and Drug Use**

**Trend**

- Alcohol and Tobacco: Decrease in use
- Illicit drugs and use of pain relievers: Slight decrease

**2016 Snapshot:**

There were variations in substance use by race.

**Depression and Suicide**

**Trend**

- Rise in major depressive episodes among youth age 12-17
- Slight rise in suicide rates (per 100,000 youths)

**Access to Food**

**Trend**

No major change in the percentage of households with children who lack access to food

**2016 Snapshot:**

- Children in female-headed households were more likely to lack access to food.

**Family, Physical, and Social Environment**

Source: U.S. Department of Education's Consolidated State Performance Report data from the National Center for Homeless Education.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Health Interview Survey.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Health Interview Survey.

For notes on data definitions and methodology, see full report.