

Protect Kids.



Oklahoma Institute For
CHILD
ADVOCACY

child poverty budget cuts
teen births OICA obesity dropouts
hunger infant mortality

Oklahoma KIDS COUNT Factbook

2010

Executive Summary

Special Report: Children of Incarcerated Parents



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Every Day in Oklahoma

150 babies are born

7 of the babies are born to children

62 of the babies are born without adequate prenatal care

12 of the babies are born too small

84 children are investigated after officials receive allegations of serious child abuse and/or neglect against them

24 children are confirmed to be victims of child abuse and/or neglect

14 children quit high school without graduating

60 children are arrested for a crime

2 of those are arrested for a violent crime

At least 2 young people will die

1 of those will be a baby

STATE OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS

The fourteenth edition of the Oklahoma KIDS COUNT Factbook continues to measure progress (or lack of progress) for children and youth in our state from the mid 1990s. This Factbook quantifies the impact of recent social, budgetary and policy changes on the well-being of Oklahoma's children, families and communities.

The twelve KIDS COUNT Factbook indicators, for which change over time is tracked, include low birthweight infants (less than 5 ½ pounds), very low birthweight infants (less than 3 pounds, 5 ounces), births to young teens (ages 15 - 17), births to older teens (ages 18 & 19), births to teens (ages 15-19), confirmations of child abuse and neglect, high school dropouts, juvenile violent crime arrests, infant mortality (under age 1), child deaths (ages 1-14), teen deaths (ages 15-19) and child/teen deaths (ages 1-19).

There is good news. There is improvement over the long term. The following eight of the twelve indicators tracked show improvement over comparable data from the middle of the 1990s or early 2000s.

- Births to Young Teens (ages 15-17)
- Births to Teens (ages 15-19)
- High School Dropouts
- Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests
- Infant Mortality (under age 1)
- Child Deaths (ages 1-14)
- Teen Deaths (ages 15-19)
- Child & Teen Deaths (ages 1-19)

There is bad news. Oklahoma's progress over the short term continues to erode. Compared to the range from previous years, the following nine of the twelve indicators tracked worsened or failed to show any improvement.

- Low Birthweight Infants (less than 5 ½ pounds)
- Very Low Birthweight Infants (less than 3 pounds, 5 ounces)
- Births to Young Teens (ages 15-17)
- Births to Older Teens (ages 18 & 19)
- Births to Teens (ages 15-19)
- Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests
- Child Deaths (ages 1-14)
- Teen Deaths (ages 15-19)
- Child & Teen Deaths (ages 1-19)

Entrenched problems continue to resist improvement. Three of the twelve indicators worsened when compared to data from the middle of the 1990s.

- Births to Older Teens (ages 18 & 19)
- Low Birthweight Infants (less than 5 ½ pounds)
- Very Low Birthweight Infants (less than 3 pounds, 5 ounces)

Large numbers of Oklahoma children reap the benefits from the improvements recorded in these pages. At the same time, many other young Oklahomans experience pain and face seemingly insurmountable challenges. As this 2010 Oklahoma KIDS COUNT Factbook is prepared, almost two hundred thousand (195,823; 2008) Oklahoma children live in poverty and more than eight thousand (8,605; SFY 2009) are victims of abuse or neglect. Each year, over five thousand (5,007; average annual SY 2006/2007 through



SY 2008/2009) youth quit high school before graduating and more (870; average annual SY 2006/2007 through SY 2008/2009) children do not even make it that far in school before quitting.

Each year, over seventy-five hundred (7,506; under age 20; average annual 2006-2008) children and teens become mothers and almost seven hundred fifty (746; average annual, 2006-2008) children and youth are arrested for murder, rape, aggravated assault or robbery. Each year, well over four hundred (431; average annual 2006-2008) Oklahoma babies

do not live to see their first birthday, with nearly four hundred more (398; average annual 2006-2008) not living to see their twentieth.

One of the twelve indicators cannot currently be tracked over time. Changes in child protection service delivery and data collection prevent comparison of recent (SFY 2009) Child Abuse & Neglect Confirmations to previous Child Abuse & Neglect Confirmations. Beginning with the 2010 Oklahoma KIDS COUNT Factbook, a new baseline will be developed to enable future comparisons.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Number of Children (2008): **906,035**
 Children are **24.9%** of the state population

Number of Poor Children (2008): **195,823**
 Child Poverty Rate (2008): **22.0%**

Indicator	Baseline Data	-	Worsened Improved	+	Recent Data
Birthweight					
Low Birthweight (<5.5 lbs)	7.1% of live births, 1994-96	-9.8%			7.8% of live births, 2006-08
Very Low Birthweight (<3 lbs 5 oz)	1.2% of live births, 1994-96	-28.6%			1.5% of live births, 2006-08
Births to Teens					
Births to Young Teens (ages 15-17)	38.1/1,000 girls 15-17, 1994-96				19.9% 30.5/1,000 girls 15-17, 2006-08
Births to Older Teens (ages 18-19)	103.1/1,000 girls 18-19, 1994-96	-5.8%			109.0/1,000 girls 18-19, 2006-08
Births to Teens (ages 15-19)	63.6/1,000 girls 15-19, 1994-96				4.5% 60.7/1,000 girls 15-19, 2006-08
Child Abuse & Neglect	9.5 confirmed/1,000 children, FY 2009				Changes prevent comparison over time; trend data available in future reports
High School Dropouts	3.7% youth <age 19, SY 2001/02-2003/04				23.4% 2.8% youth <age 19, SY 2005/06-2007/08
Violent Crime Arrests	363.3/100,000 youth 10-17, 1994-96				47.8% 189.5/100,000 youth 10-17, 2006-08
Mortality					
Infant Mortality (<age 1)	8.4/1,000 live births, 1994-96				5.8% 7.9/1,000 live births, 2006-08
Child Deaths (ages 1-14)	33.1/100,000 children 1-14, 1994-96				13.8% 28.6/100,000 children 1-14, 2006-08
Teen Deaths (ages 15-19)	100.1/100,000 teens 15-19, 1994-96				20.6% 79.4/100,000 teens 15-19, 2006-08
Child & Teen Deaths (ages 1-19)	51.0/100,000 youth 1-19, 1994-96				17.3% 42.2/100,000 youth 1-19, 2006-08

SPECIAL REPORT: CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

On average, more than twenty-five thousand adults are in Oklahoma prisons. Rates of incarceration are high. Over nine hundred of every 100,000 Oklahoma adults are incarcerated.

The costs of incarceration are high, especially for the children of Oklahoma parents who are incarcerated. About half of Oklahoma's adult prison population are parents to nearly twenty-seven thousand minor children. Three of every hundred children in Oklahoma have a mother or father or both in prison.

Children become the unsuspecting, and often invisible, victims when their parents commit crimes serious enough to be put behind bars. The children of incarcerated parents suffer when separated from their mother or father. Major developmental milestones involving parent-child relations are put at risk. When a mother or father is put in prison there are profound negative consequences for the child. Children whose parents are in prison are more than five times more likely than other children to go to prison themselves later in life after being emotionally, socially and economically deprived throughout their childhood.

About eleven of every 1,000 Oklahoma children will see their parent go into an Oklahoma prison each year. While there is an overall increase in the number of prisoners going into Oklahoma's prison system, fluctuations between each year require more years of data to predict whether the population coming into prison — and their children left behind — will increase or decrease over the next few years.

MOTHERS

Since 1993, when comparing state to state, Oklahoma has led the nation and the world in the rate at which it incarcerates women. Oklahoma currently has the highest female incarceration rate in the nation, almost doubling the national rate of women being sent to prison. Currently, almost one hundred ninety of every 100,000 Oklahoma adult women are in Oklahoma prisons at any given time.

Three of every hundred children in Oklahoma have a mother or father or both in prison.

A very high rate of Oklahoma's incarcerated women are mothers with an average of three children each. Most Oklahoma women who are incarcerated have 2.4 minor children each, totaling over forty-three hundred children whose mothers are in an Oklahoma prison. Imprisonment of mothers is very likely to disrupt a child's home, with the child frequently losing their primary source of nurturing.

Oklahoma incarcerated mothers report that their children have experienced serious problems both before and after their incarceration, ranging from bad grades to being suicidal. Oklahoma mothers who lived with their children before going to prison report little current contact with those children.

The *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)* Study, documents a direct correlation between the traumas and family dysfunction suffered in childhood with later poor adult health and welfare. Childhood exposure to multiple harmful experiences — like

being abused or neglected, witnessing their mothers being treated violently, having their parents separate or divorce or living in homes where people used drugs, were mentally ill or went to prison — have high ACE scores. High ACE scores result in risky adult behavior, resulting in disease, disability and premature death. Women incarcerated in Oklahoma tend to have high ACE scores. It would be a surprise if these Oklahoma women did not end up in trouble with the law.

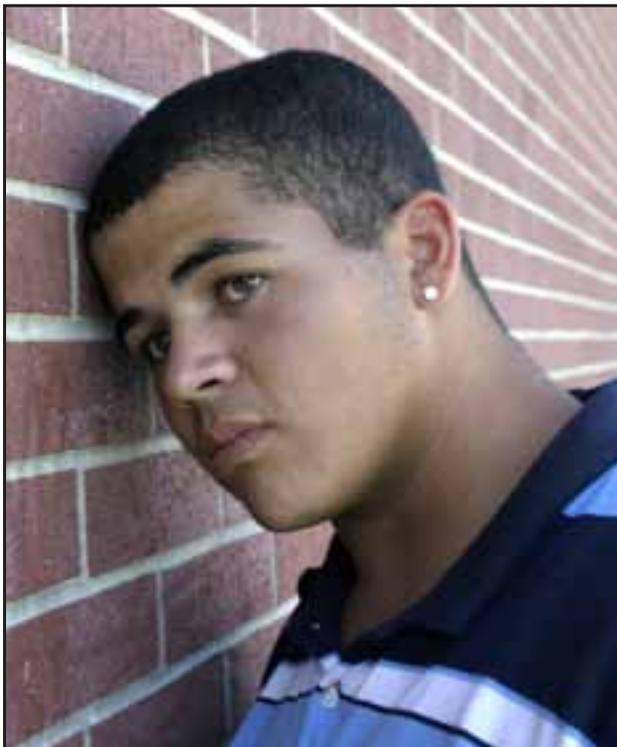
ACE scores are often higher for the children of Oklahoma’s incarcerated mothers. Many of these children suffer abuse or neglect themselves. Many watched as their mother was treated violently, used drugs or had their families split by separation or divorce. And now, many feel the brutal impact of losing their mother as she goes to prison. The ACE Study tells us that these children, without appropriate help, will travel a predictable path toward disease, disability and premature death.

FATHERS

Oklahoma has the fifth highest rate in the nation for men being sent to prison. More than seventeen hundred of every 100,000 Oklahoma adult men are incarcerated. A majority of male prisoners are fathers of minor children. An estimated twenty-three thousand Oklahoma children have their father incarcerated in an Oklahoma prison. Fathers report little current contact with their children.

Six in ten report not ever having a visit from their children since they entered prison, having no opportunity to maintain a healthy relationship. Imprisonment of fathers is very likely to disrupt a child’s home, with most of their children losing financial support and many losing an important source of nurturing.

A majority of male prisoners are fathers of minor children.



WHY WE DO NOT KNOW MORE

When a mother or father is arrested, convicted or imprisoned, they try to protect their children by not providing much information. There is little consistent information about children living with non-parent relatives, such as grandparents, or living with friends of their parents. Information available about incarceration focuses primarily on the individual being incarcerated, not the family left in the community.

WHERE IS THE CHILD WHEN THE PARENT IS ARRESTED?

Witnessing their mother or father being arrested is extremely stressful for the many children who have that experience. Two-thirds of the parents arrested were handcuffed in front of their children. Some children are traumatized by

witnessing a violent arrest of their mother or father. Those who do not witness their parent's arrest often fabricate much worse ideas about the fate of their mother or father. Many times children are not told where their mother or father really is, staying confused, feeling vulnerable and imagining all kinds of explanations.

WHERE DOES THE CHILD GO WHEN THE CAREGIVER GOES TO PRISON?

The link between prison and foster care is complex, and both leave an indelible mark when a parent is in prison and their child is in foster care. National studies provide a wide range of inconsistent and unsubstantiated rates of foster care placement for the children of incarcerated parents.

About half of the women incarcerated in Oklahoma lived with their minor children before going to prison. Of those mothers, about six percent report that after the imprisonment their children were placed in Oklahoma's foster care system. About one-third of these mothers report their children live with their other parent, typically the child's father. The homes of relatives often become new homes for the children of incarcerated mothers. Almost forty percent of incarcerated mothers who lived with their children before going to prison report that their minor children now live with their grandparent or great grandparent, adding to the already high number of grandparents raising grandchildren in Oklahoma.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS ARE INCARCERATED

Long term poverty, segregation and discrimination have resulted in the incarceration of non-whites at a rate disproportionate to their numbers in the community. About half of Oklahoma's incarcerated population is non-white. As a result the children who have parents in prison are disproportionately non-white. One in 15 African American children and one in 42 Latino children has a parent in prison, compared to 1 in 111 white children.

Parents in prison have young children. About half of the children are under ten years of age; half of those are under age five.

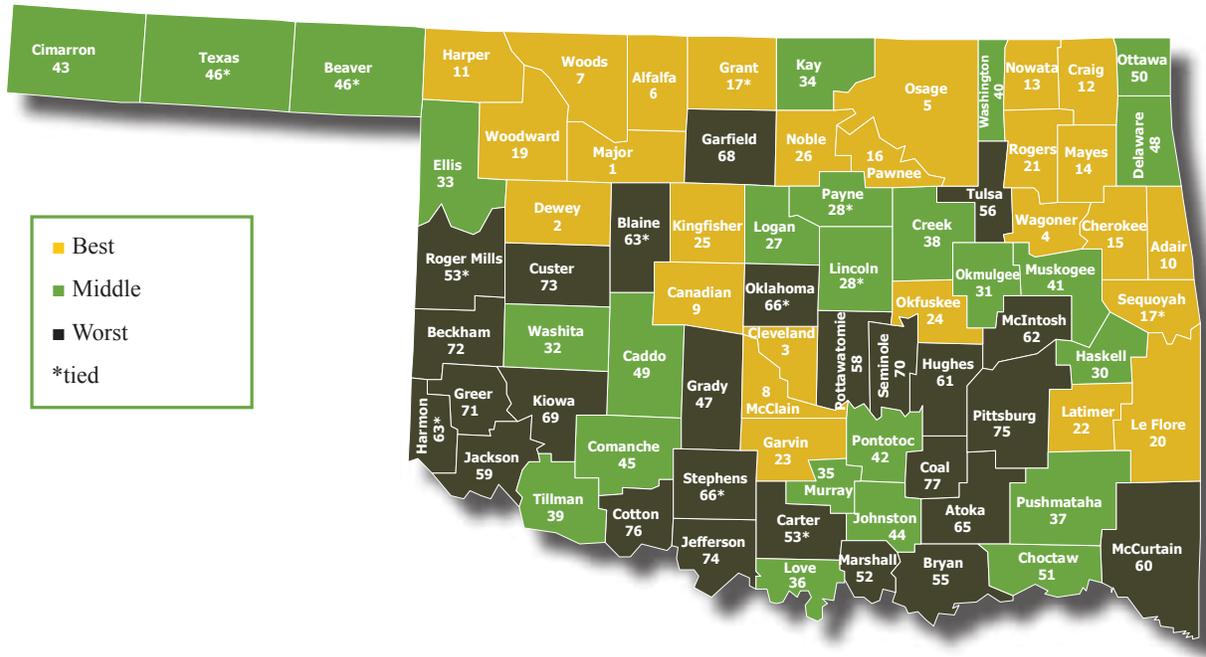
Very few children have ongoing visits or communication with their incarcerated parent regardless of whether or not that prisoner will be the custodial parent after their release back to the community.

STATE AND COUNTY CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS INDEX

Key indicators can be grouped together and compared, allowing each Oklahoma county to be ranked based on indicators related to children residing in that county who lose their parent to prison during their childhood. Each Oklahoma county is ranked on five indicators, selected to illustrate the severity of the issues at the county level [Children with Fathers In Prison, Children with Mothers in Prison, Children with Fathers Going to Prison During a Year (receptions), Children with Mothers Going to Prison During a Year (receptions) and the KIDS COUNT Adverse Childhood Experience Index]. The worse the county rank, the more likely children living there spend part of their childhood with their mother or father in prison. Major County is best, Coal County is worst.



CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS INDEX



CONCLUSION

The situation is startling. Now, more than ever before, policymakers need accurate information about this issue and everyone needs to pay more attention to children left behind when their parent or parents go to prison. Help for these children is essential to their futures and to Oklahoma’s future. In the midst of dealing with children who lose their mother or father to prison, it is easy to forget that effective solutions can be crafted. Today, with appropriate understanding and innovative programs, fewer children can be left behind. Those who are left behind can get support, feel better, stay in school, stay out of trouble, maintain healthy relationships, and when the time comes, may enjoy successful reunification with their absent parent. The first step is understanding.

Directed by a Senate Joint Resolution (SJR 48) Task Force, between 2005 and 2010, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) released installments in a series of reports about women incarcerated in Oklahoma and their children. The reports, prepared by faculty member Susan Sharp, Ph.D., and graduate student Emily Pain from the University of Oklahoma, gathered information from a sample of women incarcerated in Oklahoma randomly selected by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. The general results of the information gathered in that process are projected to the full population of women incarcerated in Oklahoma and provide much of the information summarized in this report.

2010 KIDS COUNT FACTBOOK ONLINE

Interested in viewing all of the data concerning Oklahoma’s children?

The full version of the 2010 Oklahoma KIDS COUNT Factbook is available online at www.oica.org. In addition, individual county information, sources and methodology is included online.



THE VOICE FOR OKLAHOMA'S CHILDREN

OICA works on issues impacting children at the State Capitol and with thousands of individuals, organizations and coalitions in communities across the state.

MISSION STATEMENT

We create awareness, take action and change policy to improve the health, safety, care and well-being of Oklahoma's children.

ABOUT US

Oklahomans care deeply about their children.

The evidence is everywhere: parents coaching sports teams, business leaders mentoring young students, volunteers flipping pancakes to raise money for local youth programs, congregations providing afterschool activities.

At the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA), we believe that all children are valuable and deserve opportunities to reach their potential; we believe that children are vulnerable and have the right to grow up healthy, safe and loved. We know that children rely on caring adults to provide a voice that focuses attention on unique needs. Each year, OICA works with thousands of people across the state to provide that collective voice.

We believe that by working together, Oklahomans can create a brighter future for our state's children and youth. We invite you to add your voice to ours!

STATEWIDE INITIATIVES

KIDS COUNT

OICA is Oklahoma's premier, comprehensive data source for children's health and well-being.

Oklahoma Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies

Working to improve the health and safety of mothers and babies through the first year of life.

Oklahoma Infant Alliance

Increasing awareness of critical services needed by babies born too early.

Oklahoma Afterschool Network

Working to keep kids safe, healthy and learning in their out-of-school time.

Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition

Fighting childhood obesity through awareness, policy and education.

Healthy Teens OK!

Promoting effective, evidence-based approaches to teen pregnancy prevention.

Ready by 21 Oklahoma

Working to ensure all Oklahoma young people are *Ready by 21- for college, work and life!*



This Oklahoma KIDS COUNT 2010 Factbook is a publication that reports on the well-being of children and youth in Oklahoma. Data from the Oklahoma KIDS COUNT Factbook can be accessed on the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA) website at www.oica.org.

The National KIDS COUNT Databook is an annual publication that reports on the well-being of children, youth and families in the United States. The publication is free and available through: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21202, 1-410-547-6600, or online at www.kidscount.org.

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