Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2002

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The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics was founded in 1994. Executive Order No. 13045 formally established it in April 1997 to foster coordination and collaboration in the collection and reporting of Federal data on children and families. Members of the Forum as of Spring 2002 are listed below.

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Foreword

In 1994, the Office of Management and Budget joined with six other Federal agencies to create the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. Formally established in April 1997 through Executive Order No. 13045, the Forum was called upon to develop priorities for collecting enhanced data on children and youth, improve the reporting and dissemination of information on the status of children to the policy community and the general public, and produce more complete data on children at the State and local levels. The Forum, which now has participants from 20 Federal agencies as well as partners in private research organizations, fosters coordination, collaboration, and integration of Federal efforts to collect and report data on conditions and trends for children and families.

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002 is the sixth report in an annual series prepared by the Forum agencies. As in past years, readers will find here an accessible compendium of indicators—drawn from the most recent, most reliable official statistics—illustrative of both the promises and the difficulties confronting our Nation's young people. The report presents 24 key indicators on important aspects of children's lives, including their economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. These indicators are easy to understand by broad audiences, objectively based on substantial research connecting them to reliable data on child well-being, balanced so that no single area of children's lives dominates the report, measured regularly so that they can be updated to show trends over time, and representative of large segments of the population rather than one particular group. The report also presents data on eight contextual measures that describe changes in the characteristics of the population as well as in children's family settings and living arrangements.

The 2002 report updates information displayed in previous reports, while maintaining comparability with earlier volumes and incorporating several improvements. Most notably, improvements have been made to the child care measure and the food security indicator. In addition, an indicator reporting on the number of children of foreign-born parents is being introduced as this year's special feature; it will be incorporated as a regular background measure in the Population and Family Characteristics section of future reports.

By recognizing the gaps in our information, *America's Children* challenges Federal statistical agencies to do better. Forum agencies are meeting that challenge by working to provide more comprehensive and consistent information on the condition and progress of our Nation's children. Forum agencies will continue working to strengthen some indicators and to close critical data gaps, particularly in areas such as child disability, the role of fathers in children's lives, family structure and formation, and positive behaviors associated with improved child development.

The value of the *America's Children* reports and the extraordinary cooperation they represent reflect the Forum's innovative, determined spirit to advance our understanding of where our children are today and what may be needed to bring them a better tomorrow. The Forum agencies should be congratulated once again this year for joining together to address their common goals: developing a truly comprehensive set of indicators on the well-being of America's children and ensuring that this information is readily accessible in both content and format. Their accomplishments reflect the dedication of the Forum agency staff members who coordinate the assessment of data needs, evaluate strategies to make data presentations more consistent, and work together to produce important publications and provide these products on the Forum's website: *http://childstats.gov*. Last but not least, none of this work would be possible without the continued cooperation of millions of American citizens who willingly provide the data that are summarized and analyzed by staff in the Federal agencies.

We invite you to suggest ways in which we can enhance this annual portrait of the Nation's most valuable resource: its children. I applaud the Forum's collaborative efforts in producing this sixth annual report and hope that our compendium will continue to be useful in your work.

Katherine K. Wallman
Chief Statistician
Office of Management and Budget

Acknowledgments

This report reflects the commitment and involvement of the members of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. It was prepared by the Writing Subcommittee of the Reporting Committee of the Forum. This year, the committee was chaired by Kristin Smith, U.S. Census Bureau. Other committee members included Katherine Heck, Alisa Jenny, and John Kiely, National Center for Health Statistics; Dawn Aldridge, Food and Nutrition Service; James Colliver, National Institute on Drug Abuse; David Johnson, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Laura Lippman, Patrick Rooney, and Tom Snyder, National Center for Education Statistics; Janet Chiancone, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; Tracey Woodruff, Environmental Protection Agency; and Kathy Nelson, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Reporting Committee of the Forum, chaired by Kristin Smith, guided the development of the new indicators. Members of the Reporting Committee not represented on the Writing Subcommittee included Linda Gordon, Immigration and Naturalization Service; Laura Montgomery, Gloria Simpson, and Barbara Foley Wilson, National Center for Health Statistics; Robert Kominski, U.S. Census Bureau; Jeff Evans, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Meredith Kelsey, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services; Woodie Kessel, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; Cathy Gotschall, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Russ Scarato and Stella Yu, Maternal and Child Health Bureau; and Richard Bavier and Susan Schechter, Office of Management and Budget.

Other staff members of the Forum agencies provided data, developed indicators, or wrote parts of the report. They include Joseph Dalaker, Deborah Dove, Jason Fields, Fred Hollmann, and Robin Levine, U.S. Census Bureau; Patsy Klaus and Michael Rand, Bureau of Justice Statistics; Howard Hayghe, Rowena Johnson, and Robert McIntire, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Ali Mokdad and Wayne Stephens, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Peter Basiotis and Mark Lino, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion; Gary Bickel, Food and Nutrition Service; Chris Chapman, National Center for Education Statistics; Robin Cohen, Cathy Duran, Lois Fingerhut, Donna Hoyert and Stephanie Ventura, National Center for Health Statistics; Barbara Allen-Hagen, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and Mark Nord, Economic Research Service.

Other individuals who assisted with the report included Yupin Bae, Pinkerton Computer Consultants, Inc.; and DeeAnn Brimhall and Linda Shafer, Education Statistics Services Institute.

Westat, in support of the U.S. Census Bureau, assisted the committee in producing the report. Janice Kociol coordinated and managed the production of the report and was the initial copy editor. She also prepared files for agency updates and assisted the Reporting Committee. Christine Winquist Nord provided technical guidance. Alison Fields also provided substantive and technical guidance and reviewed all edits and data-related issues. Other Westat staff members who assisted in preparing the report included Laura Flicker and Denise Pinkowitz.

The following additional staff members made valuable contributions in their reviews of the report: Deborah Klein, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Steven Carlson, Food and Nutrition Service; Michael Kogan, Maternal and Child Health Bureau; Janis Brown, Shelley Burns, Arnold Goldstein, and Val Plisko, National Center for Education Statistics; Jennifer Madans, National Center for Health Statistics; and Jane Dye, U.S. Census Bureau.

Carole Benson of Westat edited the report. Design contributions came from Westat's Graphic Arts Department, who designed the cover and flag pages, produced and updated the report's tables and figures, and updated and laid out the text. The logo was developed by John Jeter of the National Center for Health Statistics. Gregory Carroll, U.S. Census Bureau, coordinated the printing of the report. The National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse distributed the report for the Forum.

Highlights

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002 is the sixth annual report to the Nation on the condition of children in America. Eight contextual measures describe the changing population and family context in which children are living, and 24 indicators depict the well-being of children in the areas of economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. This year's report has a special feature on children of at least one foreign-born parent.

Part I: Population and Family Characteristics

- In 2000, there were 70.4 million children under age 18 in the United States, or 26 percent of the population, down from a peak of 36 percent at the end of the baby boom (1964). Children are projected to remain a substantial percentage of the total population, and are projected to comprise 24 percent of the population in 2020.

- The racial and ethnic diversity of America's children continues to increase. In 2000, 64 percent of U.S. children were white, non-Hispanic; 15 percent were black, non-Hispanic; 4 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander; and 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native. The number of Hispanic children has increased faster than that of any other racial and ethnic group, growing from 9 percent of the child population in 1980 to 16 percent in 2000.

- In 2001, 61 percent of children from birth through age 6 (not yet in kindergarten) received some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents.

- In 1997, nearly half of preschoolers (children under age 5) with working mothers were primarily cared for by a relative while their mother worked, while 22 percent were primarily cared for by nonrelatives in a home-based environment and another 22 percent were cared for in a center-based arrangement.

- Children were more likely to engage in some kind of organized before- or after-school activity as they aged. For example, in 2001, 27 percent of kindergarten through 3rd graders and 39 percent of 4th-through-8th graders participated in sports.

Part II: Indicators of Children's Well-Being

Economic Security Indicators

- The poverty rate for children living with family members has decreased substantially since 1993 when it reached a high of 22 percent. In 2000, 16 percent of children lived in families with incomes below the poverty threshold. This percentage, also observed in 1999, represents the lowest poverty rate among children since 1979.

- The decrease in poverty is apparent for children living in female-householder families and is more pronounced for black children. Among black children in female-householder families, about two-thirds lived below the poverty line from 1980 to 1993, and for the first time since 1980, fewer than half were living in poverty in 2000.

- The percentage of children who had at least one parent working full time, all year has steadily increased from 70 percent in 1980 to 80 percent in 2000. In 2000, 91 percent of children living in two-parent families had at least one parent working full time, all year. This percentage was lower for children living in single male-headed families and single female-headed families (67 percent and 50 percent, respectively).

- In 2000, 0.8 percent of children lived in households reporting child hunger, down from 1.0 percent in 1998. In 2000, 18 percent of children lived in households reporting any level of food insecurity, down from 20 percent in 1998. Children in families below the poverty line were nearly three times more likely to experience food insecurity and hunger than children in families with incomes above the poverty line.

- According to the Healthy Eating Index, the proportion of children ages 2 to 5 with good diets improved from 21 percent to 27 percent between 1996 and 1998, reversing the decline from 1995 and 1996. However, the diet quality of children ages 6 to 9 changed little between 1996 and 1998. Children in families living in poverty were less likely than higher-income children to have a diet rated as good. In 1998, for children ages 2 to 5, 22 percent of those living in poverty had a good diet, compared with 29 percent of those living above the poverty line.

Health Indicators

- Children living in poverty tend to be in poorer health than children living in higher-income families. Nevertheless, this gap narrowed between 1984 and 2000. In 1984, 62 percent of children living in poverty and 83 percent of children living at or above poverty were reported to be in very good or excellent health. By 2000, 70 percent of children living in poverty and 85 percent of children living at or above poverty were in very good or excellent health.

- While the infant mortality rate did not decline in 1998, there was a significant drop in 1999, to 7 deaths per 1,000 live births.

- Mortality for children ages 5 to 14 declined between 1998 and 1999. However, there was no significant change in mortality rates for children ages 1 to 4, or for adolescents ages 15 to 19.

- The birth rate for adolescents continued to decline in 2000 to 27 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 17, representing the lowest rate ever recorded. The bulk of the drop in the adolescent birth rate occurred between 1991 and 2000, when it dropped by nearly one-third.

Behavior and Social Environment Indicators

- Cigarette use among adolescents shows continued indications of decline from 2000 to 2001. Daily smoking in the past month decreased from 14 percent to 12 percent among 10th-graders and from more than 7 percent to less than 6 percent among 8th-graders. Daily smoking rates did not change significantly for high school seniors from 2000 to 2001.

- Since 1993, the violent crime victimization rate for youth ages 12 to 17 has decreased by 63 percent, from 44 violent crimes per 1,000 youth in 1993 to 16 per 1,000 youth in 2000.

- Since 1993, the violent crime offending rate for youth ages 12 to 17 has decreased by 67 percent, from 52 violent crimes per 1,000 youth in 1993 to 17 per 1,000 youth in 2000.

Education Indicators

- Between 1999 and 2001, the percentage of children ages 3 to 5 who were read to daily by a family member increased from 54 percent to 58 percent. This percentage has fluctuated since 1993, ranging from 53 percent to 58 percent.

- In 2001, the percentage of high school graduates ages 25 to 29 who continued their education and received a bachelor's degree remained at the all-time high of 33 percent, which was achieved in 2000. The percentage of black, non-Hispanic high school graduates who earned a bachelor's degree increased from 14 percent in 1985 to 20 percent in 2001.

Special Feature

- The foreign-born population of the United States has increased dramatically over the past few decades. In 1994, 15 percent of children living in the U.S. had at least one foreign-born parent; by 2001 this had increased to 19 percent of children.

- The percentage of children whose parents have less than a high school diploma is much higher among children with a foreign-born parent. In 2001, 42 percent of foreign-born children with at least one foreign-born parent had a parent with less than a high school diploma, compared with 35 percent of native children with at least one foreign-born parent and 11 percent of native children with native parents.

Summary List of Indicators

Indicator Name	Description of Indicator	Previous Year of Data *Value (Year)*	New Data *Value (Year)*	Change Between Years
Economic Security				
Child poverty and family income	Percentage of related children under age 18 in poverty	16 (1999)	16 (2000)	NS
Secure parental employment	Percentage of children under age 18 living with parents with at least one parent employed full time all year	79 (1999)	80 (2000)	▲
Housing problems	Percentage of households with children under age 18 that report housing problems	35 (1999)	—	—
Food security and diet quality	Percentage of children under age 18 in households experiencing food insecurity reporting child hunger	0.7 (1999)	0.8 (2000)	NS
	Percentage of children ages 2 to 5 with a good diet	21 (1996)	27 (1998)	▲
Access to health care	Percentage of children under age 18 covered by health insurance	87 (1999)	88 (2000)	▲
	Percentage of children under age 18 with no usual source of health care	7 (1999)	7 (2000)	NS
Health				
General health status	Percentage of children under age 18 in very good or excellent health	83 (1999)	82 (2000)	NS
Activity limitation	Percentage of children ages 5 to 17 with any limitation in activity resulting from chronic conditions	7 (1999)	7 (2000)	NS
Childhood immunization	Percentage of children ages 19 to 35 months who received combined series immunization coverage	78 (1999)	76 (2000)	NS
Low birthweight	Percentage of infants weighing less than 5.5 pounds at birth	7.6 (1999)	7.6 (2000)	NS
Infant mortality	Deaths before the first birthday per 1,000 live births	7.2 (1998)	7.0 (1999)	▼
Child mortality	Deaths per 100,000 children ages 1 to 4	35 (1998)	35 (1999)	NS
	Deaths per 100,000 children ages 5 to 14	20 (1998)	19 (1999)	▼
Adolescent mortality	Deaths per 100,000 adolescents ages 15 to 19	71 (1998)	70 (1999)	NS
Adolescent births	Births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 17	29 (1999)	27 (2000)	▼
Behavior and Social Environment				
Regular cigarette smoking	Percentage of 8th-grade students who reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days	7.4 (2000)	5.5 (2001)	▼
	Percentage of 10th-grade students who reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days	14 (2000)	12 (2001)	▼
	Percentage of 12th-grade students who reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days	21 (2000)	19 (2001)	NS
Alcohol use	Percentage of 8th-grade students who reported having five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the last 2 weeks	14 (2000)	13 (2001)	NS
	Percentage of 10th-grade students who reported having five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the last 2 weeks	26 (2000)	25 (2001)	NS

Legend: NS = No significant change ▲ = Significant increase ▼ = Significant decrease — = not applicable

Indicator Name	Description of Indicator	Previous Year of Data *Value (Year)*	New Data *Value (Year)*	Change Between Years
Alcohol use (cont.)	Percentage of 12th-grade students who reported having five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the last 2 weeks	30 (2000)	30 (2001)	NS
Illicit drug use	Percentage of 8th-grade students who have used illicit drugs in the previous 30 days	12 (2000)	12 (2001)	NS
	Percentage of 10th-grade students who have used illicit drugs in the previous 30 days	23 (2000)	23 (2001)	NS
	Percentage of 12th-grade students who have used illicit drugs in the previous 30 days	25 (2000)	26 (2001)	NS
Youth victims and perpetrators of serious violent crimes	Rate of serious violent crime victimizations per 1,000 youth ages 12 to 17	20 (1999)	16 (2000)	NS
	Serious violent crime offending rate per 1,000 youth ages 12 to 17	26 (1999)	17 (2000)	NS
Education				
Family reading to young children	Percentage of children ages 3 to 5 who are read to every day by a family member	54 (1999)	58 (2001)	▲
Early childhood care and education	Percentage of children ages 3 to 5 who are enrolled in early childhood centers	60 (1999)	56 (2001)	▼
Mathematics and reading achievement (0-500 scale)	Average mathematics scale score of			
	9-year-olds	232 (1999)	—	—
	13-year-olds	276 (1999)	—	—
	17-year-olds	308 (1999)	—	—
	Average reading scale score of			
	9-year-olds	212 (1999)	—	—
	13-year-olds	259 (1999)	—	—
	17-year-olds	288 (1999)	—	—
High school academic coursetaking	Percentage of high school graduates who completed high-level coursework in			
	mathematics	41 (1998)	—	—
	science	60 (1998)	—	—
	English	20 (1998)	—	—
	foreign language	13 (1998)	—	—
High school completion	Percentage of young adults ages 18 to 24 who have completed high school	86 (1999)	87 (2000)	NS
Youth neither enrolled in school nor working	Percentage of youth ages 16 to 19 who are neither in school nor working	8 (2000)	9 (2001)	NS
Higher education	Percentage of high school graduates ages 25 to 29 who have completed a bachelor's degree or higher	33 (2000)	33 (2001)	NS
Special Feature				
Children of at least one foreign-born parent	Percentage of children under age 18 by nativity of child and parents	—	19 (2001)	—

Legend: NS = No significant change ▲ = Significant increase ▼ = Significant decrease — = not applicable

About This Report

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002, developed by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, is the sixth annual synthesis of information on the status of the Nation's most valuable resource, our children. This report presents 24 key indicators of the well-being of children. These indicators are monitored through official Federal statistics covering children's economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. The report also presents data on eight key contextual measures and includes a special feature showing children of at least one foreign-born parent. The 20 agencies of the Forum have also introduced improvements in the measurement of several of the indicators presented last year.

Purpose of *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*

This report provides the Nation with a broad annual summary of national indicators of child well-being and monitors changes in these indicators over time. The Forum hopes that this report will stimulate discussions by policy-makers and the public, exchanges between the data and policy communities, and improvements in Federal data on children and families. In so doing, the Forum hopes that this report will lead to improvements in the well-being of America's children.

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics

The Forum is a formal structure for collaboration among 20 Federal agencies that produce or use statistical data on children and families. The members of the Forum are listed on the back of the cover page. Building on earlier cooperative activities, the Forum was founded in 1994. It was formally established by Executive Order No. 13045 in 1997 to foster the coordination and integration of the collection and reporting of data on children and families. The two major publications produced by the Forum are *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being* (produced annually since 1997) and *Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data and Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation and Fatherhood* (June 1998). The Forum's primary missions are to develop ways to improve consistency and enhance the collection of data on children, youth, and families and to improve the reporting and dissemination of information on the status of children and families to the policy community and the general public.

Structure of the report

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002 is intended to present information and data on the well-being of children in a nontechnical, user-friendly format. It is designed to complement other more technical or comprehensive reports produced by the Forum agencies. The report is divided into two parts.

The first part of the report, *Population and Family Characteristics*, presents data that illustrate the changes that have taken place during the past few decades in eight measures depicting the context of children's lives. These background measures provide a foundation for understanding the key indicators and the child population. They provide basic information about children in the United States and the social and demographic changes occurring in the child population. These data answer questions such as: How many children are there in the United States? What proportion of the population is under age 18? How racially and ethnically diverse are our children? How many have difficulty speaking English? In what types of families do they live? What is the quality of their environment?

The second part, *Indicators of Children's Well-Being*, contains data on key indicators of how well we are doing in providing economic security, educational opportunity, and a healthy and safe environment in which children can play, learn, and grow. Unlike the data presented in Part I of the report, which simply describe the changing context in which children live, the data in Part II offer insight into how well children are faring by providing information in four key areas of child well-being: economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education.

For each background measure in *Part I: Population and Family Characteristics*, and each indicator in *Part II: Indicators of Children's Well-Being*, three components are presented:

- *Statements* about why the measure or indicator is important to understanding the condition of children;
- *Figures* showing important facts about trends or population groups; and
- *Highlights* with information on the current status, recent trends, and important differences by population groups noted.

In addition, *Appendix A: Detailed Tables* contains tabulated data for each measure and additional detail not discussed in the main body of the report. *Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions* contains descriptions of the sources and surveys used to generate the background measures and the indicators.

Aspects of child well-being depicted in this report

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002 covers four domains of child well-being: economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. The economic security indicators document poverty and income among children and the accessibility of basic necessities such as food, housing, and health care. The health indicators document the physical health and well-being of children by presenting information on their health status, immunization coverage, death rates, and teenage births. The behavioral and social environment indicators present information about young people's participation in illegal or high-risk behaviors, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, using illicit drugs, and engaging in serious violent crimes. Finally, the education indicators examine how well we are succeeding in educating our children, including preschoolers' exposure to reading and early education, measures of student achievement, rigorous coursetaking in high school, and indicators of how many young adults complete high school and college.

Special feature

At the end of Part II, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002* presents data on one "special feature." Special features are an annual component of *America's Children*, presenting measures that are either not available with sufficient frequency to be considered as regular key indicators, or are new regular measures that the Forum believes merit special attention when first introduced into the *America's Children* report. In both cases, special features provide important information on child well-being. This year's special feature shows the increasing population of children of at least one foreign-born parent.

Changes since last year

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002 is similar to last year's report in both format and content. While most of the indicators presented last year have been included and updated, the Forum has worked to improve the report in a number of important ways. Some changes reflect improvements in the availability of data for certain key indicators. Some changes clarify the concept being measured or expand the indicator substantively. This year, improvements were made to the child care measure and the food security indicator. In addition, the special feature, children of at least one foreign-born parent, is being introduced and will subsequently be presented as a regular background measure in the *Population and Family Characteristics* section in future reports. The changes reflect the many helpful comments and suggestions for improvements that were received from readers and users of the previous reports.

Children included in this report

In order to convey a comprehensive understanding of child well-being, the report looks at the status of all children under age 18 living in the United States. A few indicators provide data on older youth and young adults (persons ages 18 to 29). In most cases throughout the report, the word "children" refers to any person under age 18 living in a civilian or noninstitutionalized setting in the United States. In some other cases, such as vital statistics, all children are included. When data are being presented only for specific age groups, this is indicated in the text (e.g., children ages 1 to 4). As is also noted in the text, some indicators examine only particular groups of children (e.g., children living in family settings, children living with parents, children in certain age groups or grade levels). For most of the indicators, the relevant information has been reported by an adult in the household or family and not directly by the children.

In many cases, we have also presented the data on children by race and Hispanic origin. In most cases, Hispanics have been separated from the white and black categories and "non-Hispanic" follows the race designation, such as "white, non-Hispanic." In some cases, data for Hispanics were not available or could not be separated from data for race groups. In these cases, data for race groups (white, black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander) include Hispanics.

Selection of the key indicators

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002 presents a selected set of key indicators of enduring interest that measure critical aspects of children's lives and are collected rigorously and regularly by Federal agencies. The Forum chose these indicators through careful examination of available data. In determining this list of key indicators, the Forum sought input from the Federal policymaking community, foundations, academic researchers, and State and local children's service providers. These indicators were chosen because they are:

- *Easy to understand* by broad audiences;
- *Objectively based* on substantial research connecting them to child well-being and using reliable data;
- *Balanced* so that no single area of children's lives dominates the report;

- *Measured regularly* so that they can be updated and show trends over time; and
- *Representative* of large segments of the population, rather than one particular group.

Data sources

Data for the key indicators are drawn primarily from national surveys and vital records. Federal agencies regularly survey the population on many issues. Some national surveys use interviewers to gather information on children through a variety of methods, including speaking directly, by telephone or in person, with families selected through rigorous sampling methods. Other surveys use questionnaires distributed directly to youth to ask about their behavior. In addition, some national data collection efforts directly assess students by giving them tests or by asking them to perform certain tasks. Federal agencies collect information on births and deaths from State health departments. These nationally representative surveys, along with data collected through vital statistics, provide the best available measures of the condition of U.S. children. Administrative data from social service agencies were not used for measures in this report. The availability and quality of such data can be affected by policy differences among agencies in various local areas and by resource constraints. Further information on data sources for this report is provided in *Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions*.

In the text of this report, percentages and rates are rounded to the nearest whole number, unless rounding would mask significant differences. The text discusses changes over time or between-group differences only when differences are statistically significant.

Additional data needed

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002 identifies critical gaps in the data available on children and youth. It challenges the Nation as a whole—and the Federal statistical agencies in particular—to improve the monitoring of important areas of children's lives. It also challenges Federal agencies to improve the timeliness with which information on children is made available to policy-makers and the public.

At the end of *Part I: Population and Family Characteristics* and at the end of each section in *Part II: Indicators of Children's Well-Being*, the report presents a description of data and measures of child well-being in need of development. These lists include many important aspects of children's lives for which regular indicators are lacking or are in development, such as homelessness, long-term poverty, mental health, disability, neighborhood environment, and early childhood development. In some of these areas, the Forum is exploring ways to collect new measures and improve existing ones. In others, Forum agencies have successfully fielded surveys incorporating some new measures but they are not yet available on a regular basis for monitoring purposes.

For further information

There are several good places to obtain additional information on each of the indicators found in this report. First, for many of the indicators, *Appendix A: Detailed Tables* contains additional detail not discussed in the main body of the report. For example, some tables show additional breakouts by gender, race and Hispanic origin, or another category. Second, *Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions* contains information and descriptions of the sources and surveys used to generate the indicators as well as information on how to contact the agency responsible for collecting the data or administering the relevant survey. Third, numerous publications of the Federal statistical agencies provide additional detail on each of the key indicators included in this report, as well as on scores of other indicators. These reports include *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth*, published annually by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; *The Condition of Education*, published annually by the National Center for Education Statistics; and *Health, United States*, published annually by the National Center for Health Statistics. Often these compendia contain additional details not reported in *America's Children*. *Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions* also contains a list of agency contacts who can provide further information on the relevant surveys and indicators. Finally, the Forum's website, *http://childstats.gov*, contains many links to Forum agency publications that often provide more detail about the indicators in this report.

America's Children on the Internet

The report can be found on the World Wide Web at *http:// childstats.gov*. The website version of the report contains data for years that are presented in the figures but not in the tables in this report. The Forum's website also contains information on the overall structure and organization of the Forum, as well as other reports, and news on current activities. Also found on the website are links to international comparative data and related reports of Forum agencies and other organizations providing more detailed data. The website addresses of the Forum agencies are found on the following page.

Agency Websites

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics:
http://childstats.gov

Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service:
http://www.fns.usda.gov

Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau:
http://www.census.gov

Department of Defense
Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel Support, Families and Education):
http://mfrc.calib.com

Department of Education
National Center for Education Statistics:
http://nces.ed.gov

Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality:
http://www.ahrq.gov
Maternal and Child Health Bureau:
http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov
National Center for Health Statistics:
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development:
http://www.nichd.nih.gov
National Institute on Drug Abuse:
http://www.nida.nih.gov
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation:
http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov

Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Policy Development and Research:
http://www.huduser.org

Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Statistics:
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs
National Institute of Justice:
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention:
http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org

Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics:
http://www.bls.gov
Women's Bureau:
http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb

Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:
http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Children's Health Protection:
http://www.epa.gov/children

National Science Foundation
Science Resources Statistics Division
http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs

Office of Management and Budget
Statistical Policy Office:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb

Table of Contents

Foreword i
Acknowledgments ii
Highlights iii
Summary List of Indicators v
About This Report vii

Part I: Population and Family Characteristics 1

Child Population 3
Children as a Proportion of the Population 4
Racial and Ethnic Composition 5
Difficulty Speaking English 6
Family Structure and Children's Living Arrangements 7
Births to Unmarried Women 8
Child Care 10
Children's Environments 12
Data Needed 13

Part II: Indicators of Children's Well-Being 15

Economic Security Indicators 15
Child Poverty and Family Income 16
Secure Parental Employment 18
Housing Problems 19
Food Security and Diet Quality 20
Access to Health Care 22
Indicators Needed 24
Health Indicators 25
General Health Status 27
Activity Limitation 28
Childhood Immunization 29
Low Birthweight 30
Infant Mortality 31
Child Mortality 32
Adolescent Mortality 34
Adolescent Births 36
Indicators Needed 37

Behavior and Social Environment Indicators 39
Regular Cigarette Smoking 41
Alcohol Use 42
Illicit Drug Use 43
Youth Victims and Perpetrators of Serious Violent Crimes 44
Indicators Needed....46
Education Indicators....47
Family Reading to Young Children 48
Early Childhood Care and Education 49
Mathematics and Reading Achievement 50
High School Academic Coursetaking 52
High School Completion 53
Youth Neither Enrolled in School Nor Working 54
Higher Education 55
Indicator Needed 56

Special Feature....57

Children of at Least One Foreign-Born Parent 58

Notes to Indicators 59

Appendices....65

Appendix A: Detailed Tables 65
Appendix B: Data Source Descriptions 117