

NEWS



Embargoed Until July 10, 2017 at 12:01a.m.

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2017 Kids Count Rankings: Atlantic County Ranks 9th in Child Health; Falls Short in Economic Well-Being

Atlantic County ranked ninth for child health among all 21 counties but was 19th in the area of child and family economics, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Atlantic County also has the highest rent burden in the state with 62 percent of children living in households paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent. On a brighter note, more Atlantic children are starting the day with school breakfast,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

“We encourage community leaders to use the data to identify opportunities for progress and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Atlantic County ranks:

19th in Child and Family economics: For the 60,100 children that call Atlantic County home, 22 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 7.4 percent, compared to New Jersey’s 5 percent.

9th in Child Health: About a quarter of all Atlantic children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015; that puts the county fifth overall on this measure. The percentage of kids without health insurance – 3.6 percent, is just below the state’s average of 3.7.

17th in Safety and Well-being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working is 9 percent, exceeding the state’s average of 6 percent. In addition, 13.2 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated in 2015, up from 8.5 in 2011. Atlantic County also saw a dramatic decrease in juvenile arrests from nearly 25 arrests per 1,000 in 2011 to 12 in 2015.

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16th in Education: The high school graduation rate is in line with New Jersey's graduation rate of 90 percent. Forty-six percent of low-income students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 10th on this indicator. However, 13 percent of children are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

To read the reports, visit www.acnj.org.

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Bergen County Ranks among Top 10 for Economic Well-Being, Health, Safety and Education

Bergen County received its highest ranking – third – in the area of child and family economics and its lowest ranking – eighth – in child health, still remaining within the top 10 across four domains of child well-being, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“While fewer Bergen families face child poverty or unemployment, the reality is that more than 17,000 children still live in households struggling to make ends meet,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. “The federal school breakfast program helps many low-income students start the school day ready to learn, but participation in Bergen County remains low.”

Zalkind said she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Bergen County Ranks:

Third in Child and Family Economics: Bergen County’s relatively low percentage of children in poverty and unemployment rate, 9 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively, contribute to the county’s higher performance on this ranking. But despite having one of the lowest percentages of households with high rent burdens in the state, 45 percent of Bergen households still pay 30 percent or more of their income on rental costs.

Eighth in Child Health: Bergen’s rate of uninsured children mirrors the state average of 3.7 percent, placing the county 13th on this measure. About 20 percent of all Bergen children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, ranking ninth among the 21 counties. Bergen also ranked ninth in the percentage of babies born with a low birthweight – 7.6 compared to the New Jersey average of 8.1.

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Fifth in Safety and Well-Being: Only 4 percent of Bergen teens are not in school and not working, compared to the state's average of 6 percent. In addition, 9.4 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in 2015, down from 14.1 in 2011. Bergen County also saw a significant decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 14.2 arrests per 1,000 in 2011 to 7.7 in 2015.

Sixth in Education: Bergen received high marks for its high school graduation rate – 95 percent compared to New Jersey's graduation rate of 90 percent. And only 7 percent of students are chronically absent – missing 10 percent or more school days, placing Bergen fourth in the state on this indicator. However, Bergen ranks nearly last for its participation in school breakfast, with only 26 percent of low-income children starting the day with a morning meal at school; the state average is 47 percent.

In addition to the county profiles and pocket guide, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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Burlington County Ranks 9th in Education, 15th in Child Safety and Well-Being

Burlington County received its highest ranking – ninth – in education and its lowest ranking – 15th – in child safety and well-being, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Some counties have seen encouraging progress, but the reality is that nearly 11,000 Burlington County children live in families struggling to make ends meet,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. “From increasing lead testing for young children to addressing child hunger with school breakfast, community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Burlington County Ranks:

10th in Child and Family Economics: Burlington County’s percentage of children in poverty and unemployment rate, 12 percent and 4.4 percent, respectively, is better than the state average of 16 and 5 percent. But more than half of Burlington households pay 30 percent or more of their income on the cost of rent.

13th in Child Health: Burlington has the fifth lowest rate of uninsured children among the 21 counties at 2.1 percent; the state average is 3.7 percent. But there is room for improvement in the area of lead testing for young children. About 11 percent of all Burlington children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, ranking 19th on this indicator. Bergen also ranked 11th in the percentage of babies born with a low birthweight – 8.2 compared to the New Jersey average of 8.1.

15th in Safety and Well-Being: The rate of Burlington teens not in school and not working mirrors the state average of 6 percent, placing the county 11th on this indicator. Burlington County saw an uptick in substantiated or established cases of child abuse or neglect, from 9.5 percent in 2011 to 13.7 in 2015.

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Consistent with state trends, the county experienced a drop in juvenile arrest rates from roughly 17.1 arrests per 1,000 in 2011 to 13.3 in 2015.

9th in Education: Burlington ranks eighth for its high school graduation rate – 94 percent compared to New Jersey’s graduation rate of 90 percent. And 10 percent of students are chronically absent – missing 10 percent or more school days, placing ninth on this indicator. In addition, Burlington ranks 16th for its participation in school breakfast, with 36 percent of low-income children starting the day with a morning meal at school; the state average is 47 percent.

In addition to the county profiles and pocket guide, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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Camden County Ranks 14th in Education, 19th in Safety and Well-Being

Camden County received its highest ranking – 14th – in the area of education and its lowest ranking – 19th – in safety and well-being among all 21 counties, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Some counties have seen encouraging progress, but the reality is that nearly 24,000 Camden County children live in families struggling to make ends meet,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. “It’s critical that these children have access to vital safety-net programs. The good news is that the county ranks within the top 10 for school breakfast participation and rate of uninsured children.”

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Camden County Ranks:

15th in Child and Family Economics: With 20 percent of children living in poverty and unemployment at 5.5 percent, Camden shows room for improvement in these indicators. In addition, the percentage of Camden households paying 30 percent or more of their income on rental costs mirror the state average of 50 percent.

18th in Child Health: Camden has the eighth lowest rate of uninsured children among the 21 counties at 2.5 percent; the state average is 3.7 percent. However, roughly 14 percent of all Camden children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, ranking 14th on this indicator. Camden ranked 18th in the percentage of babies born with a low birthweight – 9 percent compared to the New Jersey average of 8.1.

19th in Safety and Well-Being: Eight percent of Camden teens are not in school and not working, compared to the state average of 6 percent. In addition, 13.4 percent of reported cases of child abuse or

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neglect were substantiated or established in 2015, up from 12.1 in 2011. Despite a drop in juvenile arrests from roughly 30 arrests per 1,000 in 2011 to 24.4 in 2015, Camden placed nearly last on this indicator.

14th in Education: Camden ranks 15th among all 21 counties for its graduation rate and percentage of chronically absent students at 89 percent and 13 percent, respectively. The good news is that 49 percent of eligible Camden County students start the day with school breakfast, slightly above the state average of 47 percent.

In addition to the county profiles and pocket guide, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Cape May Shows Room for Improvement in Child Well-Being

Cape May County received its highest ranking – 12th – in education, but placed last in the area of safety and well-being among all 21 counties, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“The good news is that fewer children in Cape May are born with low birthweights and more than half of low-income students start the day with school breakfast. However, Cape May County has the highest percentage of residents struggling to find work at 9.8 percent,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

“From curbing chronic absenteeism to increasing lead testing for young children, community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Cape May County Ranks:

17th in Child and Family Economics: Despite a decrease in unemployment from 15.5 percent in 2012 to 9.8 percent in 2016, Cape May’ unemployment rate is nearly double the state average. In addition, 55 percent of households pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, surpassing the state average of 50 percent.

15th in Child Health: Cape May received its highest mark, ranking fourth, in the percentage of babies born with low birthweights at 6.5 percent; the state average is 8.1 percent. But there is room for improvement in the number of children tested for lead and the percentage of uninsured children. While overall more than a quarter of New Jersey children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, Cape May’s testing rate was 12.8 percent, ranking 16th on this indicator. Cape May also ranked 17th in the percentage of children without health insurance – 4.1 percent compared to the New Jersey average of 3.7.

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21st in Safety and Well-Being: Cape May came in last in all three indicators of safety and well-being: idle teens, juvenile arrests and substantiated or established cases of reported child abuse or neglect. Eleven percent of Cape May teens are not in school and not working, compared to the state average of 6 percent. Despite a drop in juvenile arrest rates from roughly 40.1 arrests per 1,000 in 2011 to 30.3 in 2015, Cape May's arrest rate is still nearly three times higher than the state average. The county also saw an uptick in the percentage of substantiated or established cases of abuse or neglect at 16.3 percent in 2015 compared to 12.8 in 2011; the 2015 state average is 10.5 percent.

12th in Education: Cape May's graduation rate of 88 percent is slightly below the state average of 90 percent. And roughly 12 percent of students are chronically absent – missing 10 percent or more school days, placing Cape May 14th on this indicator. The good news is that 52 percent of eligible Cape May County students start the day with school breakfast, slightly about the state average of 47 percent.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Cumberland Shows Room for Improvement in Child Well-Being

Cumberland County showed room for improvement in several areas, ranking 21st in education and 18th in child health, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“About a quarter of Cumberland County children live in families struggling to make ends meet. The county also has the highest chronic absenteeism rate and the lowest graduation rate in the state,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, who produces the state Kids Count reports. “The good news is that Cumberland ranks second in providing low-income children with school breakfast, helping them start the school day ready to learn.”

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Cumberland County Ranks:

20th in Child and Family Economics: For the more than 36,000 children that call Cumberland County home, 25 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. The unemployment rate, at 7.5 percent, is higher than the state’s 5 percent, and rental costs prove to be a burden to many Cumberland households with 60 percent spending 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

18th in Child Health: About 23.6 percent of children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, putting the county in eighth place in the state on this measure. The percentage of babies born with low birthweights– 9.3 percent, is the highest in the state. However, just 3.1 percent of Cumberland children live without health insurance, slightly below the state average of 3.7.

18th in Safety and Well-Being: Exceeding the state’s average of 10.5 percent, 13.1 percent of children with reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in 2015. Cumberland County saw a dramatic decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 24.7 in 2011 to 16.4 in 2015, consistent

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with a statewide trend. Ten percent of Cumberland teens are not working and not in school, putting Cumberland near the bottom of the rankings on this indicator.

21st in Education: Cumberland's 82 percent high school graduation rate falls below New Jersey's rate of 90 percent. Cumberland also has the highest percentage of students chronically absent, with 15 percent missing roughly 10 percent or more of the enrolled school days. Yet, 55 percent of low-income Cumberland County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county second on this indicator.

In addition to the county profiles and pocket guide, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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Essex County Ranks 14th in Safety and Well-Being, 20th in Child Health

Essex County showed room for improvement in several areas, ranking 20th in child health and 14th in safety and well-being, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Essex County shows mixed progress, especially in the area of child health having the highest rate of lead testing for young children along with the highest rate of uninsured kids,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, who produces the state Kids Count reports. “From curbing chronic absenteeism to increasing access to health insurance, community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Essex County Ranks:

18th in Child and Family Economics: For the 191,000 children that call Essex County home, 24 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. The unemployment rate, at 6.0 percent, is above the state’s 5.0 percent. Additionally, rental costs prove to be a burden to many Essex households, with 56 percent spending 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

20th in Child Health: The percentage of babies born with low birth weights– 9.2 percent, is the second highest in the state. Roughly 6.1 percent of Essex children live without health insurance, one of the state’s highest percentages of uninsured children. However, more than 40 percent of children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015 in Essex County, placing the county in the top spot in the state on this measure.

14th in Safety and Well-Being: Eight percent of Essex teens were not working or not in school, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth. Just above the state’s average of 10.5 percent, 10.8 percent of Essex children with reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or

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established in 2015. Essex County saw a decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 13.9 in 2011 to 10.2 in 2015, following a statewide trend of declining juvenile arrest rates.

19th in Education: Essex has a high school graduation rate of 84 percent, lower than New Jersey's rate of 90 percent. Also, 15 percent of students are chronically absent, one of the state's highest percentages of chronic absenteeism. This means students miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days, or roughly two days a month. On a positive note, 54 percent of low-income Essex County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county in the top five on this indicator.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Gloucester County Posts Mixed Progress for Child Well-Being

Gloucester County posted mixed progress, placing eighth in the state for education but ranking 21st in the area of child health, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“In the coming years, Gloucester County could do better in ensuring more young children are tested for lead. Less than 8 percent of children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015. The county’s rate of uninsured children – 5 percent - is also higher than the state average of 3.7 percent,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Gloucester County Ranks:

11th in Child and Family Economics: For the nearly 66,000 children that call Gloucester County home, eight percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. The unemployment rate, at 5.1 percent, is slightly above the state’s 5 percent. Rental costs prove to be a burden to many Gloucester households as 57 percent spend 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

21st in Child Health: Less than 8 percent of children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015 in Gloucester County, putting the county at the lowest rank in the state on this measure. The percentage of babies born with low birth weights– 8.0 percent, is just below the state’s average of 8.1.

12th in Safety and Well-Being: Exceeding the state’s average of 10.5 percent, 15.6 percent of children with reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in 2015. Gloucester County saw a dramatic decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 19.2 in 2011 to 8 in 2015, following a statewide trend of declining juvenile arrest rates.

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8th in Education: Gloucester boasts a 92 percent high school graduation rate, higher than New Jersey's rate of 90 percent. Thirty-nine percent of low-income Gloucester County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 13th on this indicator. Also, eight percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Hudson County Posts Mixed Progress for Child Well-Being

Hudson County ranked ninth for safety and well-being but was 16th in the area of child health among all 21 counties, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Hudson has one of the highest child poverty rates in the state, but the county is doing a much better job providing school breakfast to low-income students and testing for lead among young children,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Hudson County Ranks:

12th in Child and Family Economics: For the 136,000 children that call Hudson County home, a staggering 26 percent live in poverty, the second highest percentage of children living in poverty in the state. Unemployment is at 4.7 percent, compared to New Jersey’s 5 percent. In addition, 46 percent of Hudson County households spend 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

16th in Child Health: About 37 percent of all Hudson children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, placing the county second overall on this measure. However, with 5.2 percent of children living without health insurance, compared to 3.7 percent of all children in the state, Hudson ranks in the bottom at 19th place.

9th in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 7 percent, exceeding the state’s average of 6 percent. The county saw a decrease in substantiated or established cases of child abuse and neglect between 2011

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and 2015, dropping from 13.9 percent to 9.5 percent. Consistent with statewide declines, Hudson County also saw a decrease in juvenile arrests rates from 12.4 in 2011 to 8.7 in 2015.

10th in Education: Hudson County's 83 percent high school graduation rate is significantly lower than New Jersey's graduation rate of 90 percent. Additionally, 12 percent of students are chronically absent in Hudson County, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days. Fifty-five percent of low-income Hudson County students start the day with school breakfast however, placing the county third on this indicator.

In addition to the county profiles and pocket guide, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

To read the reports, visit www.acnj.org.

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Hunterdon County Ranks 1st in Child Health, Top 10 in Economic Well-Being, Safety and Education

Hunterdon County ranked first for child health among all 21 counties but was 10th in the area of safety and well-being, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Hunterdon claimed the top spot for its high school graduation rate and low rate of chronic absenteeism as well as juvenile arrests in New Jersey. But there are still areas of concern including low school breakfast participation and a comparatively high percentage of substantiated or established cases of child abuse or neglect,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

“We encourage community leaders to use the data to identify opportunities for progress and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Hunterdon County Ranks:

4th in Child and Family Economics: For the nearly 27,000 children that call Hunterdon County home, 10 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. While Hunterdon has the lowest unemployment rate in the state at 3.8 percent, half of all families spend 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

1st in Child Health: Less than 7 percent of children in Hunterdon County are born with low birthweights. About 2.0 percent of Hunterdon County children under the age of 18 do not have health insurance, compared to the state average of 3.7 percent. Just over 13 percent of Hunterdon children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, placing the county 15th overall on this measure.

10th in Safety and Well-Being: Seven percent of teens are not in school and not working, exceeding the state’s average of 6 percent. In addition, the county saw no change in the percentage of substantiated

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or established cases of child abuse or neglect from reports in 2011 and 2015, remaining at 16.2 percent. Consistent with the overall drop in juvenile arrests across New Jersey, Hunterdon County's juvenile arrests rates decreased from 9.2 arrests per 1,000 in 2011 to 5 in 2015.

3rd in Education: Hunterdon's 97 percent high school graduation rate is significantly higher than New Jersey's graduation rate of 90 percent, ranking the county first on this indicator. Also first is the county's chronic absenteeism rate at 5 percent, half of the state average. Yet, only 16 percent of low-income students start the day with school breakfast in Hunterdon, landing at the bottom on this indicator.

In addition to the county profiles and pocket guide, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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2017 Kids Count: Mercer County Ranks among Top 10 in Economic Well-Being, Health and Safety; Falls Short in Education

Mercer County ranked sixth in child and family economics but was 19th in education, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Some counties have seen encouraging progress, but the reality is that 46 percent of Mercer County households are spending more than 30 percent or more of their incomes on rent,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

“We encourage community leaders to use the data to identify opportunities for progress and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Mercer County Ranks:

6th in Child and Family Economics: For the nearly 81,000 children that call Mercer County home, 16 percent live in poverty, putting the county in 12th place on this indicator. Unemployment is at 4.3 percent, compared to New Jersey’s 5 percent.

7th in Child Health: Nearly 24 percent of Mercer County children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, slightly less than the state average of 26 percent. In addition, 2.6 percent of kids are without health insurance, placing Mercer ninth on this indicator; New Jersey’s child uninsured rate is 3.7 percent.

10th in Safety and Well-Being: Six percent of Mercer teens are not enrolled in school and without work, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, in line with the state percentage. Mercer County also had a lower percentage of reported children with substantiated or established cases of abuse or neglect than the state, putting the county in the eighth spot on this indicator. Consistent with statewide trends, the county saw a dramatic decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 29.3 arrests per 1,000 in 2011 to 13.5 in 2015.

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19th in Education: Mercer’s 89 percent high school graduation rate is just below New Jersey’s rate of 90 percent. Thirty-two percent of low-income Mercer County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 17th on this indicator. In addition, 12 percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days; the state average is 10 percent.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Middlesex County among Top 5 for Economic Well-Being, Safety and Education, 12th in Child Health

Middlesex County ranked third in safety and well-being among all 21 counties but was 12th in child health, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education, provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“In the area of child safety and well-being, Middlesex County ranks fourth in the low rate of juvenile arrests and has the second lowest percentage of established or substantiated cases of abuse or neglect,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. “Still, the county could do better in ensuring more children have access to health insurance.”

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Middlesex County Ranks:

5th in Child and Family Economics: For the nearly 184,000 children that call Middlesex County home, 10 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is at 4.4 percent, compared to New Jersey’s 5 percent. Forty-seven percent of Middlesex County households have high rent burdens, meaning they spend 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

12th in Child Health: About 20 percent of Middlesex children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015; that puts the county 10th overall on this measure. The percentage of kids without health insurance – 3.8 percent, is just above New Jersey’s 3.7.

3rd in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, also referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 6 percent, which is in line with the state average. In addition, 6.6 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in 2015, which decreased

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from 9.2 in 2011. Middlesex County also saw a decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 10.2 in 2011 to 7.1 in 2015.

5th in Education: Middlesex posted a 91 percent high school graduation rate, just above the state average graduation rate of 90 percent. Forty-seven percent of low-income Middlesex County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county eighth on this indicator. In addition, 8 percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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Monmouth County Ranks 4th in Child Health and Education; among Top 10 for Economic Well-Being and Safety

Monmouth County ranked fourth for both child health and education among all 21 counties but was ninth in the area of child and family economics, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Some counties have seen encouraging progress, but the reality is that more than half of Monmouth County households spend 30 percent or more of their income on rent,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

“From increasing lead testing for young children to addressing child hunger with school breakfast, community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Monmouth County Ranks:

Ninth in Child and Family Economics: For the 138,000 children that call Monmouth County home, 10 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 4.4 percent, compared to New Jersey’s 5 percent. Monmouth County ranks 14th in rent burdened households with 52 percent paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent.

Fourth in Child Health: About 17 percent of Monmouth County children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015, placing the county 11th overall on this measure. The percentage of kids without health insurance is 2.7 percent, well below the state’s average of 3.7.

Seventh in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 4 percent, which is lower than the state average of 6 percent. In addition, 7.7 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or

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established in 2015, down from 9.5 in 2011. Monmouth County also saw a decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 18.1 arrests per 1,000 in 2011 to 11.1 in 2015.

Fourth in Education: Monmouth's high school graduation rate is at 94 percent, the fourth highest in the state. Forty-one percent of low-income Monmouth County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 12th on this indicator. In addition, 9 percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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Morris County Ranks 1st in Economic Well-Being, Top 5 in Health, Safety and Education

Morris County ranked among the top five counties for key areas of child well-being, ranking first in family economics and fifth in child health, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Fewer Morris children live in families struggling to make ends meet, but there are still nearly 6,500 kids in poverty. The county can do better in increasing participation in the federal school breakfast program, a valuable resource to help low-income students start the day ready to learn,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

“From increasing lead testing for young children to addressing child hunger with school breakfast, community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Morris County Ranks:

First in Child and Family Economics: For the nearly 110,000 children that call Morris County home, 6 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 3.9 percent, compared to New Jersey’s 5 percent. Morris County also has the state’s lowest percentage of rent burdened households, with 42 percent paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent.

Fifth in Child Health: Roughly 11 percent of Morris County children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015; that puts the county eighteenth overall on this measure. The percentage of kids without health insurance – 1.9 percent, is well below the state average of 3.7.

Third in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 3 percent, half the state average. Also, 9.8 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in 2015, which increased

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slightly from 9.3 in 2011. Morris County saw a decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 11.6 per 1,000 arrests in 2011 to 6.8 in 2015.

Second in Education: Morris County boasts a 95 percent high school graduation rate, higher than the state average of 90 percent, and the second highest rate in the state. Thirty-two percent of low-income Morris County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 18th on this indicator. In addition, 5 percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Ocean County among Top Two in Child Health and Safety and Well-Being; Falls Short in Education

Ocean County posted mixed progress, ranking first and second in New Jersey for safety and well-being and child health, but was 18th in education, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Ocean County has the lowest percentage of substantiated or established cases of abuse or neglect and ranks second in the rate of juvenile arrests. Still, more than 25,000 Ocean County children live in families struggling to make ends meet,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Ocean County Ranks:

16th in Child and Family Economics: For the 138,000 children that call Ocean County home, 19 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 5.2 percent, slightly above New Jersey’s 5 percent. Ocean County also has a high percentage of rent burdened households with 58 percent spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent.

2nd in Child Health: Slightly less than a 24 percent of all Ocean children under age 6 gets a blood lead test on a given year; that puts the county sixth overall on this measure. The percentage of kids without health insurance – 3.7 percent, is in line with the state average.

1st in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 5 percent, below the state’s average of 6 percent. In addition, 6.5 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in

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2015, the lowest in the state. Ocean County also saw a dramatic decrease in juvenile arrest rates from nearly 12.2 in 2011 to 6.7 in 2015.

18th in Education: Slightly higher than the state's graduation rate of 90 percent, 91 percent of Ocean County high school students graduate in 4 years. Thirty-nine percent of low-income Ocean County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 14th on this indicator. And 13 percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

In addition to the county profiles and pocket guide, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Passaic County Ranks 11th in Child Health, 20th in Economic Well-Being

Passaic County received its highest ranking – 11th – in child health and its lowest ranking – 20th – in the area of economic well-being, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Passaic County has the highest percentage of children in poverty, with more than 33,000 living in families struggling to make ends meet,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. “At the same time, fewer low-income Passaic students start the school day hungry; the county tops the list for the highest participation in the federal school breakfast program.”

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Passaic County Ranks:

20th in Child and Family Economics: For the 124,000 children that call Passaic County home, 27 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 6.1 percent, higher than New Jersey’s 5 percent. Passaic County also has the second highest percentage of rent burdened households in the state with 60 percent spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent.

11th in Child Health: More than 35 percent of all Passaic children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015; that puts the county third overall on this measure. The percentage of kids without health insurance – 3.7 percent is in line with the state average.

16th in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 9 percent, exceeding the state’s average of 6 percent. In addition, 9.8 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in

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2015, up from 7.2 in 2011. Passaic County saw a decline in juvenile arrest rates from nearly 20.9 in 2011 to 15.5 in 2015.

15th in Education: Fifty-seven percent of low-income Passaic County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county first on this indicator. Though Passaic performs well on serving eligible students breakfast, the county falls in the bottom tier for both graduation rates and chronic absenteeism. Passaic County's high school graduation rate falls below the state average, with 86 percent of Passaic students graduating in 4 years. And 14 percent of children are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days, putting Passaic in 19th place on this measure.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Salem County Ranks 9th in Child Health, 19th in Safety and Well-Being

Salem County ranked in the top ten for child health among all 21 counties but was 19th in the area of safety and well-being, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Salem County has one of the highest rates of unemployment, juvenile arrests, and teens not working and not in school in New Jersey,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. “On a more positive note, the county is doing a much better job ensuring that children have access to critical safety-nets like school breakfast and health insurance.”

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Salem County Ranks:

13th in Child and Family Economics: For the 14,000 children that call Salem County home, 17 percent live in poverty, slightly higher than the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 6.3 percent, just above New Jersey’s 5 percent. In Salem County, 46 percent of households spend 30 percent or more of their income on rent, placing the county fifth overall on this measure.

Ninth in Child Health: Salem ranks first in the percentage of kids without health insurance – 1.9 percent; the state average is 3.7. About 17 percent of all Salem children under age 6 received a blood lead test in a 2015, placing 12th overall on this measure.

19th in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working is 10 percent, ranking Salem second to last in the state on this indicator. In addition, 12.0 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in 2015, up from 6.7 in 2011. Salem County also

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saw a decline in juvenile arrest rates from 30.7 in 2011 to 21.1 in 2015. Still, the county has one of the highest juvenile arrests rates in the state.

17th in Education: Salem County's 88 percent graduation rate falls just below the state's rate of 90 percent. Forty-seven percent of low-income Salem County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county in the top ten on this indicator. However, 13 percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Somerset County Ranks 1st in Education, 14th in Child Health

Somerset County ranked among the top two counties for economic health, education, and safety and well-being, but was 14th in child health, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Somerset children are less likely to live in families struggling to make ends meet and more likely to have better attendance and graduate high school,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. “Still, in the coming years, the county could do better in ensuring more young children are tested for lead. Less than 13 percent of children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015; the state average is about 27 percent.”

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Somerset County Ranks:

Second in Child and Family Economics: For the more than 76,000 children that call Somerset County home, 8 percent live in poverty, compared to the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 4.1 percent, just below New Jersey’s 5 percent. Forty-four percent of Somerset County households have high rent burdens, meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their income on rent.

14th in Child Health: Only about 12 percent of all Somerset children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015; that puts the county 17th overall on this measure. The percentage of kids without health insurance – 2.3 percent, out performs the state’s average of 3.7.

Second in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 3 percent, far below the state’s average of 6 percent, putting Somerset at the top of this measure. In addition, 6.6 percent of reported cases of child abuse or

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neglect were substantiated or established in 2015, down from 8.6 in 2011. Somerset County also saw a dramatic decrease in juvenile arrests rates from 14.0 in 2011 to 7.9 in 2015.

First in Education: Somerset County's high school graduation rate of 94 percent is in the top five highest graduation rates in the state—higher than New Jersey's rate of 90 percent. Forty-nine percent of low-income Somerset County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county sixth on this indicator. And roughly 5 percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

To read the reports, visit www.acnj.org.

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KIDS COUNT is a national and state-by-state statistical effort to track the state of children in the United States, sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Advocates for Children of New Jersey is a statewide child research and action organization and the New Jersey Kids Count grantee.

NEWS



Embargoed Until July 10, 2017 at 12:01a.m.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Sussex County Posts Mixed Progress for Child Well-Being

Sussex County ranked second for child health among all 21 counties but was 12th in the area of education, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“In area of child health, Sussex has the lowest percentage of children born with a low birthweight and ranks second in the low rate of uninsured children,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. ““Still, in the coming years, the county could do better in ensuring more young children are tested for lead. Less than 11 percent of children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015; the state average is about 27 percent.”

Sussex County Ranks:

Seventh in Child and Family Economics: For the 30,000 children that call Sussex County home, 7 percent live in poverty, less than half the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 4.7 percent, compared to New Jersey’s 5 percent. Yet, Sussex County has a higher percentage of rent burdened households than the state, with 51 percent of households paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent.

Second in Child Health: Less than 11 percent of Sussex children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015; that puts the county second to last on this measure. Sussex County has the second lowest percentage of kids without health insurance – 1.9 percent—far below the state’s average of 3.7.

Sixth in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 5 percent, below the state’s average of 6 percent. In addition, 8.4 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in 2015, down from 11.0 in 2011. Sussex County also saw a decline in juvenile arrest rates from 10.7 in 2011 to 7.5 in 2015. Sussex has the fifth lowest juvenile arrest rate in the state

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12th in Education: High school graduation rates for Sussex are higher than the state average, reaching 94 percent. However, participation in the federal school breakfast program and the rate of chronic absenteeism – students missing 10 percent or more of enrolled school days, show room for improvement. Twenty-six percent of low-income Sussex County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 19th on this indicator. In addition, 11 percent of students are chronically absent; the state average is 10 percent.

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NJ Kids Count Rankings: Union County Ranks 10th in Education, 16th in Child Health

Union County showed mixed progress, placing 10th in the state for education but ranking 16th in the area of child health, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county profiles and pocket guide released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“In Union County, where more than 20,000 children live in families struggling to make ends meet, county leaders could do better in ensuring more children have access to health insurance. The county’s rate of uninsured children is the second highest in the state,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports. “On a positive note, Union ranks fourth in lead testing for young children; 33 percent children under age 6 received a blood lead test in 2015.”

Zalkind said that she hopes community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.

Union County Ranks:

13th in Child and Family Economics: For the nearly 132,000 children that call Union County home, 16 percent live in poverty, in line with the state average. Unemployment is 5.2 percent, just above New Jersey’s 5 percent. Fifty-one percent of Union County households have high rent burdens, meaning they spend 30 percent or more of their incomes on rent costs.

16th in Child Health: A high percentage of Union County children under age 6, about 33 percent, received a blood lead test in 2015, putting the county fourth overall on this measure. However, the percentage of kids without health insurance – 6.0 percent, falls well above the state average of 3.7 percent, causing Union to fall second to last place on this indicator.

12th in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 7 percent, slightly higher than the state’s average of 6

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percent. In addition, 10.5 percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated or established in 2015, down from 12.4 in 2011. Union County also saw a decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 12.8 in 2011 to 8.5 in 2015.

10th in Education: Union's 89 percent high school graduation rate falls just below the state's rate of 90 percent. Forty-five percent of low-income Union County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 11th on this indicator. In line with the state average, about 10 percent of students are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days.

In addition to the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released *New Jersey Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Children*, in May, which provides state-level data in all areas of child well-being.

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Warren County Ranks among Top 10 for Economic Well-Being, Health, Safety and Education

Warren County ranked fifth for child health among all 21 counties—its highest ranking out of four areas of child well-being, according to the annual New Jersey Kids Count county rankings and profiles released today.

The rankings, which compare counties on 12 measures of child well-being, and across four domains – economics, health, safety and well-being, and education – provide a closer look at how children are faring in various parts of the state, often revealing a range of outcomes depending on where they live. The pocket guide, *NJ Kids Count 2017: The State of Our Counties* provides county-by-county child trend data across 40 measures of child well-being.

“Fewer Warren children live in families struggling to make ends meet, but more than 45 percent of households spend too much on rent. The county can do better in increasing participation in the federal school breakfast program, a valuable resource to help low-income students start the day ready to learn,” said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of Advocates for Children New Jersey, which produces the state Kids Count reports.

“From increasing lead testing for young children to addressing child hunger with school breakfast, community leaders can use the data to recognize areas of concern and target resources to improve the lives of children in their county.”

Warren County Ranks:

Eighth in Child and Family Economics: For the 22,000 children that call Warren County home, 12 percent live in poverty, less than the state average of 16 percent. Unemployment is 4.6 percent, compared to New Jersey’s 5 percent. Forty-seven percent of Warren County households have high rent burdens, meaning rent consumes 30 percent or more of their incomes.

Fifth in Child Health: Only 14 percent of children under age 6 gets a blood lead test on a given year; that puts the county 13th overall on this measure. One of New Jersey’s biggest success stories is the low rates of uninsured children across all counties. In Warren County, 2.3 percent of children were uninsured, well below the state average of 3.7 percent.

Eighth in Safety and Well-Being: The percentage of teens not in school and not working, sometimes referred to as idle or disconnected youth, is 6 percent, in line with the state’s average. In addition, 11.1

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percent of reported cases of child abuse or neglect were substantiated in 2015, up from 9.6 in 2011. Warren County also saw a decrease in juvenile arrest rates from 12.5 in 2011 to 7.9 in 2015.

Sixth in Education: At 94 percent, Warren County boasts graduation rates higher than the state's 90 percent. Thirty-seven percent of low-income Warren County students start the day with school breakfast, placing the county 15th on this indicator. Eight percent of Warren students are chronically absent, missing 10 percent or more of enrolled school days, compared to 10 percent of students statewide.

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