

New Jersey Kids Count 2015 Essex County Profile



The county profiles present the most recent data for each indicator. For historical data, please see the New Jersey Kids Count County Pocket Guides, which can be found in the library at www.acnj.org.

County Rankings at-a-Glance

| County | 2014 RANK | 2015 RANK |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Atlantic | 20 | 20 |
| Bergen | 4 | 5 |
| Burlington | 9 | 9 |
| Camden | 18 | 17 |
| Cape May | 15 | 14 |
| Cumberland | 21 | 21 |
| Essex | 17 | 16 |
| Gloucester | 11 | 10 |
| Hudson | 14 | 15 |
| Hunterdon | 1 | 2 |
| Mercer | 13 | 13 |
| Middlesex | 5 | 4 |
| Monmouth | 7 | 7 |
| Morris | 2 | 1 |
| Ocean | 10 | 11 |
| Passaic | 16 | 18 |
| Salem | 19 | 19 |
| Somerset | 3 | 3 |
| Sussex | 8 | 6 |
| Union | 12 | 12 |
| Warren | 6 | 8 |

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2015 KIDS COUNT COUNTY PROFILES

2014 County Rank: 17

| | Year | County | NJ | 2014 Rank | 2015 Rank |
|---------------------|------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| DEMOGRAPHICS | | | | | |
| Child Population | 2013 | 191,819 | 2,022,117 | 2 | 2 |
| Total Population | 2013 | 789,565 | 8,899,339 | 3 | 3 |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----|----|
| FAMILY ECONOMICS | | | | | |
| Percentage of Children in Poverty | 2013 | 25 | 17 | 20 | 16 |
| Median Income of Families with Children | 2013 | \$60,563 | \$85,248 | 17 | 16 |
| Percentage Unemployed | 2014 | 7 | 5.7 | 17 | 17 |
| Percentage of HH Spending More Than 30% of Income on Rent | 2013 | 53 | 51 | 12 | 14 |
| Percentage of Eligible Children Receiving Free/Reduced Price School Breakfast | 2014-15* | 52 | 41 | 2 | 2 |

*Please note that the 2014-15 percentage data are preliminary and based upon the most recent data, which include school meal eligibility data as of 2013-14 school year and receiving data as of October 2014.

| | | | | | |
|---|------|----|----|----|----|
| HEALTH AND SAFETY | | | | | |
| Percentage of Women Receiving Early Prenatal Care | 2011 | 68 | 79 | 19 | 20 |
| Percentage of Births to Girls 10-19 | 2011 | 7 | 5 | 15 | 16 |
| Infant Mortality (rate per 1,000 live births) | 2011 | 6 | 5 | 14 | 17 |
| Child Abuse/Neglect Investigations* | 2013 | 55 | 47 | 14 | 14 |
| Children in Out-of-Home Placement* | 2013 | 6 | 4 | 19 | 16 |
| Juvenile Arrests* | 2012 | 14 | 15 | 11 | 11 |

*Rate per 1,000 children under 18.

| | | | | | |
|--|---------|----|----|----|----|
| EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION | | | | | |
| % of Family Income Spent on Licensed Child Care for a Family with One Infant and One Preschooler | 2013 | 30 | 25 | 20 | 16 |
| Percentage of Students Passing 4th Grade Tests | 2013-14 | 67 | 74 | 16 | 19 |
| Percentage of Students Passing 8th Grade Tests | 2013-14 | 67 | 77 | 20 | 18 |
| Percentage of Students Passing 11th Grade Tests | 2013-14 | 79 | 86 | 16 | 20 |



To view data sources and for more information, visit www.acnj.org

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Giving Every Child A Chance

NEWS



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Essex County Rises to 16th in Kids Count Rankings

Essex County rose to 16th place in the annual **New Jersey Kids Count** rankings, which measure progress in improving the lives of children in 13 critical areas. Last year, the county ranked 17th.

Essex County made the most progress in lowering the percent of income families spent on child care, advancing from 20th last year to 16th place in the Kids Count rankings. The county also improved in several measures of child poverty, including percent unemployed and median family income.

The county lost ground, however, in student performance on state test among 4th and 11th graders and the rate of child abuse or neglect investigations.

“Statewide, we are seeing some positive trends, including fewer uninsured children and more children starting their school day with a healthy breakfast,” said Cecilia Zalkind, executive director of Advocates for Children of New Jersey, which publishes the Kids Count reports. “In the face of rising poverty, these supports are essential to ensure children have the nutrition and healthcare they need to succeed in school.”

“This is the fifth straight year that child poverty has increased in New Jersey,” Zalkind added. “While we have taken some steps to address this, we continue to put children on the budgetary backburner. As New Jersey legislators discuss the governor’s proposed budget, the top priority should be investments in children and families, including tax credits for the working poor, preschool and child care assistance.”

This year’s **New Jersey State Kids Count** report includes a special section on race, which found that black, Hispanic and mixed race children, on average, struggle more than children of other races. These children are more likely to live in poverty, experience

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negative health outcomes, be involved in the state child protection and juvenile justice systems and struggle in school. These data, however, are not available on a county-level.

Following are some key trends in Essex County.

Child poverty. With no change from the year prior, 25 percent of Essex County children lived in families that earned too little to meet their needs in 2013 – much higher than the state average of 17 percent. Other counties saw increases, however, resulting in Essex jumping in the rankings from 20th to 16th place.

During that same time, the percent of Essex families spending more than the recommended 30 percent of their income on rent declined slightly, from 54 percent to 53 percent. This still surpasses the statewide percent of 51 and as a result of other counties exceeding Essex on this indicator, the county dropped in the rankings from 12th to 14th percent.

Median income for families with children also saw a positive shift, increasing from nearly \$59,400 to more than \$60,500 from 2012 to 2013. In addition, the county saw a slight decline in the unemployment rate at 7 percent in 2014, compared to 7.8 in 2013.

Child health. Essex County posted positive improvements in areas of child health. The county saw a decrease from 8 to 7 percent of birth to teens and a drop in its infant mortality rate from 7 deaths per 1,000 live births to 6 deaths in 2011, the most recent year that data are available.

Child care costs. Although it is recommended that a family spend no more than 10 percent of their income on child care, the average Essex family with one infant and one preschooler in center-based care spent 30 percent of their income on child care in 2013. This is higher than the state average of 25 percent, but an improvement from the prior year's rate of 33 percent. Essex advanced from 20th to 16th on this measure.

Child safety. Essex saw an uptick in child abuse or neglect investigations at 55 per 1,000 children, up from 54 in 2012 -- surpassing the statewide average of 47.

Test scores. In 2014, Essex fell state test performance among 4th and 11th graders with a pass rate of 67 and 79 percent, respectively. The 8th grade pass rate was unchanged from 2012-13 to 2013-14 at 67 percent, but the county still inched up in the Kids Count ranking, from 20th to 18th place.

In addition to releasing the county rankings, Advocates for Children of New Jersey also released:

- ***New Jersey Kids Count 2015: The State of Our Children***, which provides state-level data on key measures of child well-being.
- ***New Jersey Kids Count 2015: The State of Our Counties***, a pocket guide that provides a 5-year comparison of various measures of child well-being, including poverty, health, education and child protection.

To help counties use the data to address the needs of children, Advocates for Children will host two Kids Count Regional Forums – one in South Jersey and one in Central Jersey -- bringing together county, city and state leaders with the people in the community who work with children and families.

“These forums are designed to foster discussions about the data that result in concrete action at the state, county and local levels,” Zalkind said. “When we use data to drive critical decisions about responding to the needs of children, everyone benefits -- children, families, our communities and our state.”

To view the county profiles, the pocket guide and the state Kids Count report and for a schedule of Kids Count forums, go to 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.

How ACNJ Calculated the Rankings for 2015

Ranks are computed for each indicator so that 1 is the most positive and 21 is the least positive. For example, a county with the highest test scores would rank #1, while the county with the highest unemployment rate would rank #21.

Thirteen indicators of child well-being are ranked. The ranks exclude child and total population because these are not measures of child well-being. Each indicator is ranked for each county, and each county is given an overall rank based on the rankings of its individual indicators. For county rankings, each indicator is given equal weight except for the three rankings for test scores (fourth, eighth and eleventh grades). The three grades are averaged for each county and that average is given the same weight as a single indicator. This is done to avoid over-representation of test scores in the final overall county rankings.

New Jersey Kids Count 2015 County Profiles

Data Sources and Technical Notes

Demographics

Child Population, 2013. As reported by the US Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program.

Total Population, 2013. As reported by the US Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program.

Family Economics

Percentage of Children in Poverty, 2013. The percentage of children under 18 living in families earning below 100 percent of the federal poverty line, as reported by the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, chart b17001.

Median Income of Families with Children, 2013. Includes families with children, as reported by the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey chart b19125.

Percentage Unemployed, 2014. As reported by the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Data are not seasonally adjusted and are as of December for each year. 2011 data are preliminary.

Percentage of Households Spending More Than 30% Percent of Income on Rent, 2013. As reported by the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey chart b25070.

Percentage of Eligible Children Receiving Free/Reduced-Price School Breakfast, 2014-15. Rates calculated using eligibility data from the NJ Department of Education and participation data from the NJ Department of Agriculture. Includes children attending traditional public schools and charter schools. Please note that the 2014-15 percent of eligible students receiving free- and reduced-price meals are based upon the most recent eligibility data as of October 2013, while the number of students receiving free- and reduced-price meals is as of October 2014. Some variation in eligibility may occur.

Health and Safety

Percentage of Women Receiving Early Prenatal Care, 2011. Percentage of live births for which the mother received prenatal care during the first trimester, as reported by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics, New Jersey State Health Assessment Data.

Percentage of Births to Girls 10-19, 2011. The percentage of babies born to girls ages 10-19 as a percentage of all births in each county, as reported by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics, New Jersey State Health Assessment Data.

Infant Mortality (rate per 1,000 live births), 2011. The number of babies who died before their first birthday, calculated as a rate per 1,000 live births. As reported by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics, New Jersey State Health Assessment Data.

Child Abuse/Neglect Investigations (rate per 1,000 under 18), 2013. Number of children who were alleged victims of child abuse/neglect. Calculated using data from the NJ Department of Children and Families and population data from the US Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program.

Children in Out-of-Home Placement (rate per 1,000 under 18), 2013. Includes children under age 18 in all placements, including foster care, relative care, group homes, residential treatment and institutions. Calculated using data from the NJ Department of Children and Families and population data from the US Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program.

Juvenile Arrests (rate per 1,000 under 18), 2012. Juveniles under 18 arrested. Calculated using data from the NJ Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of State Police, Uniform Crime Reports and population data from the US Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program. Please note updated 2013 data were not available at the time of release of this report.

Early Care and Education

% of Family Income Spent on Licensed Child Care for a Family with One Infant and One Preschooler 2013. Median income data are as reported by the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey chart B19125. Cost data are as reported by the NJ Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NJACCRRRA), *The State of Child Care in New Jersey: A Profile of Key Child Care Indicators 2013*.

Percentage of Children Passing 4th Grade Tests 2013-14. As reported by the NJ Department of Education. Includes children enrolled in traditional public schools as well as charter schools.

Percentage of Children Passing 8th Grade Tests 2013-14. As reported by the NJ Department of Education. Includes children enrolled in traditional public schools as well as charter schools.

Percentage of Children Passing 11th Grade Tests 2013-14. As reported by the NJ Department of Education. Includes children enrolled in traditional public schools as well as charter schools.