



THE STATE OF TEXAS CHILDREN *2007*

Texas KIDS COUNT Annual Data Book

The State of Texas Children *2007*

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*W*hen our kids are healthy, educated, and have pathways to opportunity, our state thrives. Ensuring that kids are doing well today is how we ensure that we all prosper tomorrow.

Our annual KIDS COUNT report gives readers the latest look at how our children are faring. Results are mixed.

Texas became the fastest growing state in the nation in 2006. However, the total child population is declining in half of Texas' counties, particularly in West Texas. Whether growing or declining, counties experiencing dramatic swings in child population will face important planning questions regarding their economies, physical infrastructure, and demand for social supports in the coming years.

In addition, Texas continues to have the country's highest rate of children without health insurance. Over one in six of the country's uninsured kids lives in Texas. The report also finds that the percentage of children living in poverty is on the rise, with some of the largest increases occurring in the Panhandle.

The encouraging news is that Texas has made progress in many areas. For example, the state legislature recently expanded and simplified the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), a major source of health insurance for children in working families. In 2005, the legislature added a perinatal program to CHIP, which covered nearly 35,000 low-income pregnant women

and infants in 2007.¹ In addition, although child poverty rates are increasing for the state, rates along the Texas–Mexico border are showing a marked decline thanks to increased economic activity and declining unemployment in the region.

Maternal and infant health is improving in Texas as well. This report finds that more women are receiving prenatal care, infant mortality is improving slightly, and teen births continue to decline.

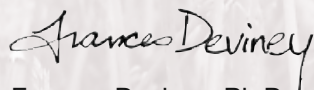
We still have a long way to go to ensure the best possible opportunities and outcomes for Texas' children. Nevertheless, strong public will and good public policy can lead to substantial improvements for children and all of Texas.

When its children prosper, Texas prospers. By addressing our children's needs, we can be stronger as a community—both now and into the future. We hope this report is useful in assessing how we are doing and where we go from here.



F. Scott McCown

CPPP Executive Director



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Population

A study in contrasts: Between 2000 and 2005, Irion County saw a 24% decline in its child population, while Rockwall County's child population grew by 36%.

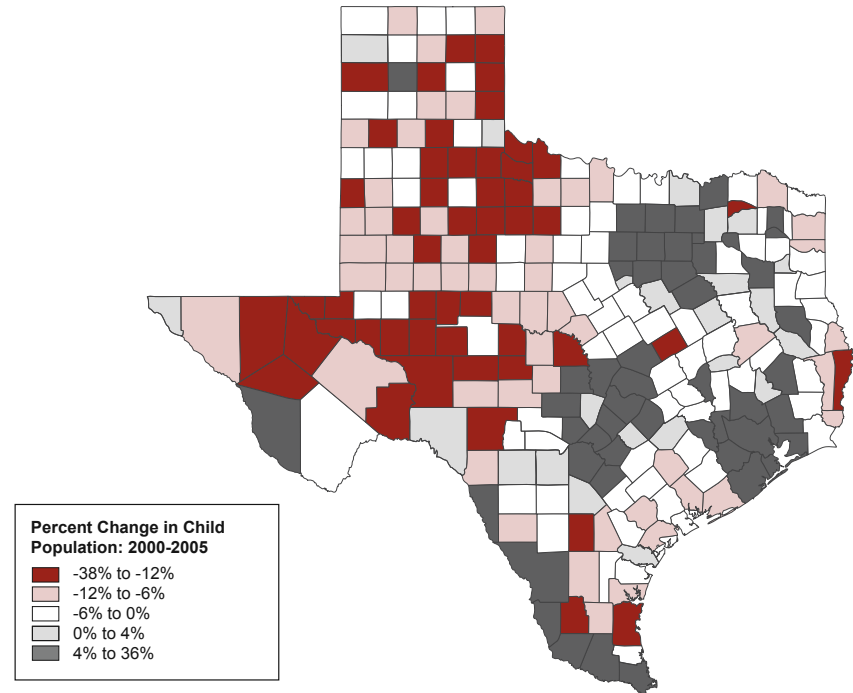
Source: Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer

In 2006, Texas surpassed California as the fastest growing state in the nation. Texas has gained almost 2.7 million people since 2000, resulting in a population of over 23 million.² With over 6.2 million children ages birth to 17, Texas' child population has increased by more than 350,000 children since 2000, and about 1.4 million since 1990. About half (52 percent) of Texas' change is due to more births and lower mortality. The remaining increase is due to interstate and international migration.³

Conversely over half of Texas counties (181 out of 254) have seen a decline in their child population since 2000. Three-quarters of those counties with a loss in their child population are in rural or small suburban counties.⁴ Population declines are typically attributed to families moving to another part of the state or country or more deaths than births.⁵

Whether growing or declining, counties experiencing dramatic swings in child population will face important planning questions regarding their economies, physical infrastructure, and demand for social supports.

Over Half of Texas' Counties Seeing Decline in Their Child Population



Source: Texas State Data Center and the Office of the State Demographer

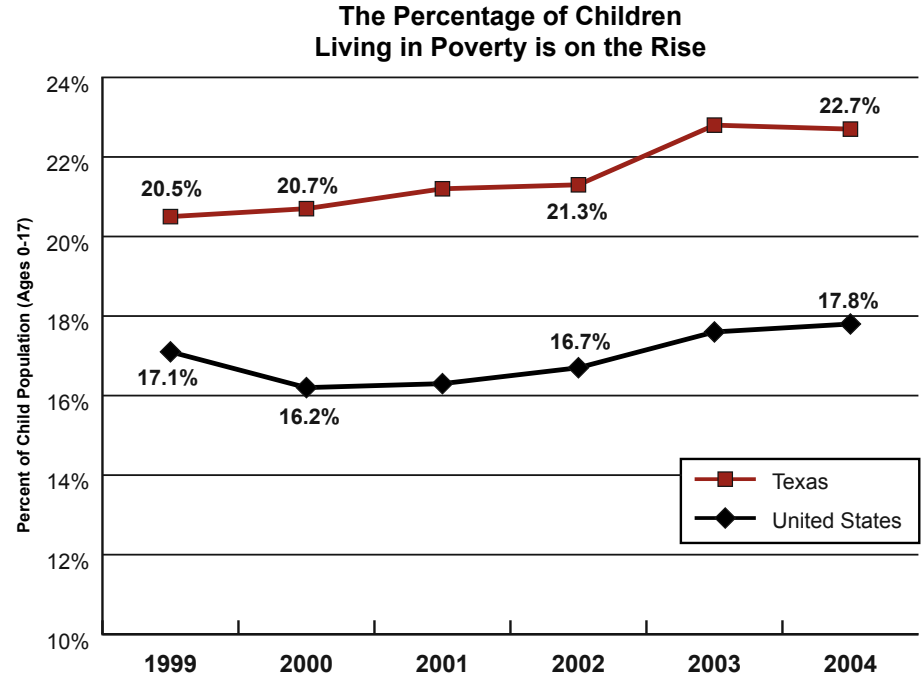
Economic (In)Security

Poverty

Living in poverty reduces children's overall well-being as poverty is related to their overall health, education, and occupational opportunities. Although increases in poverty rates are concerning, the problem is not insurmountable. Good public policy can buffer many children from the worst effects of poverty and even has succeeded in shrinking poverty rates for the elderly. With over one in five Texas children living in poverty, we must repeatedly ask our government officials when they develop economic and social policy, "Is it good for children?"

The U.S. government established federal poverty guidelines in the 1960s to identify families living in poverty. These annual guidelines define poverty as a specific low-income level for various family sizes. Families with annual incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL) are considered officially poor.⁶ These guidelines are used to determine eligibility for many government programs.⁷

To view your county's data, visit Texas KIDS COUNT at www.cppp.org/kidscount



Source: 2004 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau



Not all children experience poverty at the same rate. Those residing along the Texas–Mexico border are more likely to live in families experiencing economic insecurity. Although rates have declined in these communities since 1995, one-third to one-half of children along the border live in poverty. In contrast, several counties in the panhandle have experienced an increase in child poverty over the last decade.

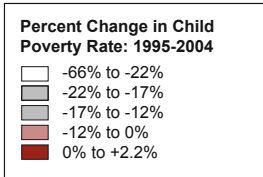
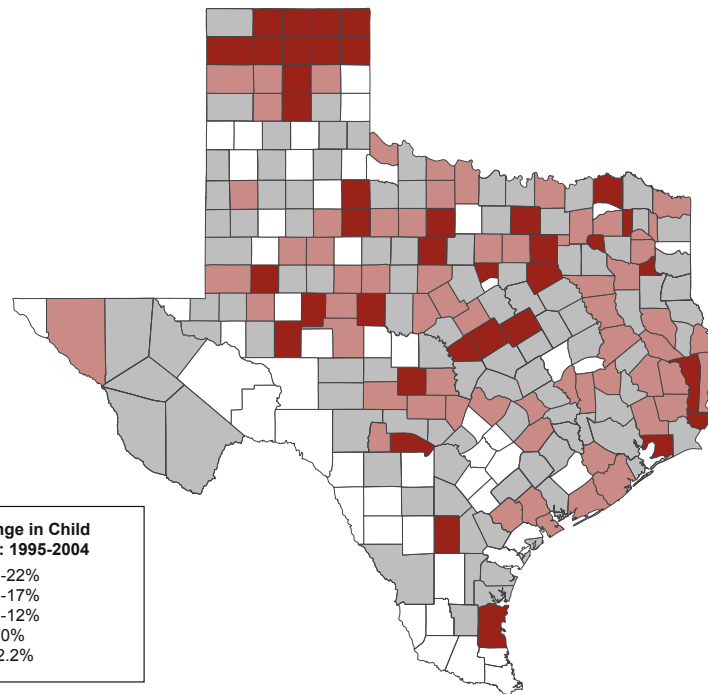
High Child Poverty Rates Along the Texas–Mexico Border Declining

Rates Worsening in Panhandle and Many Other Counties Around the State

2007 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Family Size	Annual Income	Monthly Wage ⁸	Hourly Wage ⁹
2	\$13,690	\$1,141	\$6.58
3	\$17,170	\$1,431	\$8.25
4	\$20,650	\$1,721	\$9.93

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Source: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

One of every eight working families in Texas lives below the federal poverty line. For working families with at least one minority parent, the ratio climbs to over one in two families.

Source: 2007 Working Poor Families Project's analysis of 2005 U.S. Census American Community Survey and Current Population Survey data

Poverty Despite Work

Full-time work does not guarantee an adequate income for many Texas families—just ask the more than 360,000 working families living in poverty despite holding down a job.¹⁰

Even parents with incomes up to two times the official poverty level may experience significant economic distress and have difficulty paying the rent, keeping up with medical expenses, and making the car payment. In fact, 49 percent of Texas children live in families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (i.e., less than \$42,000 per year for a family of four),¹¹ despite the fact that in 76 percent of low-income families at least one parent is employed.¹²

A Portrait of Texas' Working Families

		Spend More Than 1/3 of Income on Housing	Parent Without High School Degree/GED	Parent With No Health Insurance
Working Families Below 100% FPL	13%	76%	55%	70%
Working Families Below 200% FPL	38%	53%	48%	57%

Source: 2007 Working Poor Families Project's analysis of U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey and 2004-2006 Current Population Survey March Supplement data

Note: FPL—Federal Poverty Level

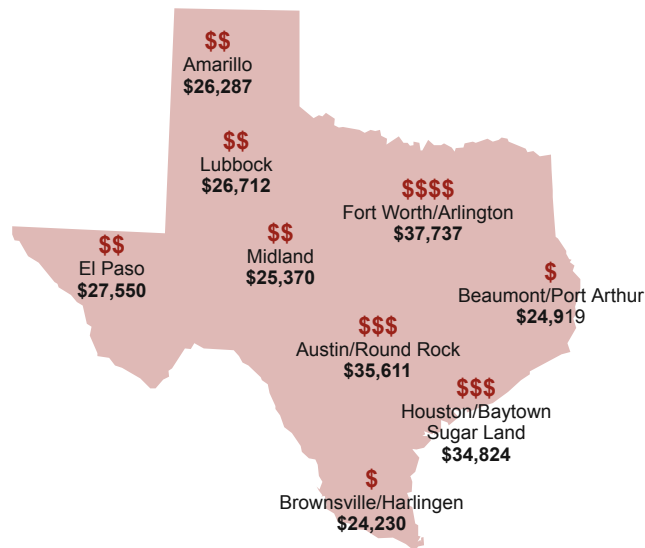


The Family Budget Estimator

Working parents in low-income families often earn too much to receive public assistance for such essential items as child care, housing, and food, but find themselves unable to cover all of their expenses at the end of the month. The Center for Public Policy Priorities designed the Family Budget Estimator (FBE) to conservatively estimate what it really costs for families to have the basics in Texas' 27 metropolitan areas. The FBE better reflects low-income families' financial obligations than the federal poverty guidelines.¹³

The FBE demonstrates that families that are not considered officially poor may still experience significant economic distress. In most of Texas' metropolitan areas, the necessary income to cover basic yet essential expenses ranges between 1.5 to 2.3 times the poverty line, assuming that the employer pays for a portion of the family's health insurance.¹⁴ If families have to pay for health insurance entirely out of pocket, their necessary incomes could range from 1.7 to over 3 times the poverty line. For families earning less than these estimated budgets to live a basic but safe and healthy life, they must have supports from their extended family, community, and the government.

The Necessary Annual Income for a Single Mother with Two Children to Cover Basic Expenses Ranges from \$24,000 in Brownsville to Nearly \$39,000 in Fort Worth



Source: Budgets for Single-Parent, Two-Child Family with Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance, 2007 *Family Budget Estimator, What it Really Takes to Get by in Texas*, Center for Public Policy Priorities

Note: To view budgets for all 27 metro areas and across eight different family sizes, visit the FBE at our website: www.cppp.org/fbe