

**Target Need Area:**  
*Children and Youth*

## Overview

The 2000 Census data indicated that 25.7 %, or 72,293,812, of the United States population were under the age of 18 (up from 64 million in 1990). About 36% of households in the country had children. Of the population under the age of 18, 16.6% were living below poverty level\*, 7.42% lived below half of the poverty level and 37.8% lived below more than twice the poverty level. This data indicated that 9.8 percent of the population ages 16-19 were high school dropouts and 8.9 percent were 16-19 and not in school, nor working. The percentage of children 5-15 years of age who have difficulty speaking English was 6.6% and 5.8% of children (5-15 years old) had one or more disabilities. Slightly over 20% of children live in high-poverty neighborhoods (where 20% or more of the population is below poverty).

In 2002, 69 percent of children lived with two parents, 23 percent lived with only their mother, 5 percent lived with only their father and another 4 percent lived in households with neither parents. Grandparents play a significant role in the family households of many children even when a parent is present. Ten percent of children who lived with a single mother were grandchildren of the householder and eight percent of children who lived with grandparents also lived with single fathers. When children live in households without either parent, about 44 percent live in their grandparent's household.

Texas Kids Count 2000 reports that the population of children in Texas will grow 47 percent over the next 30 years and the state will have more than 8.5 million children in 2030. Overall, this group will have a smaller overall percentage of the population, down from 28.6% in 1996 to 25.3% in 2030. Children's issues should be viewed in the context of this large and growing group of citizens. While the economy in Texas has improved over the last few years, there has not been a significant decline in child poverty rates in the same period. Poverty statistics show that in Texas, one in four children now live in poverty.

The Anne E. Casey Foundation (<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/databook/>) reports the following statistics:  
Texas ranks 47<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states for percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16-19).  
Texas ranks 49<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states for teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15-17).  
Texas ranks 44<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states for percent of children in poverty.  
Texas ranks 37<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states overall for risk indicators for children and youth.

Note: \*The U.S. Office of Management and Budget defines the U.S. poverty threshold. Poverty thresholds differ by family size and are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index.

Some relevant issues related to Children and Youth in Texas include:

- Demographic changes – steady and significant increase in the number of children.
- Economic status – a significant number of children in the state continue to live in poverty.
- Education – the school age population in Texas will increase 14 percent from 1996 to 2008. Texas continues to be one of the lowest spending states in per pupil spending for education.
- Services for families – changes in eligibility, enrollment procedures and burdensome administrative requirements appear to be contributing to dramatic declines in many social services for this population.
- Health – a child's health is a good predictor of well-being and success in school.

- Child safety and protection – there have been fluctuations in the number of confirmed victims of child abuse or neglect and child abuse related deaths. Services are expensive and funding appropriations are necessary for sustained declines.

## **Part I. Summary of the Results**

**Part I. Summary of the Results** are presented in charts that show converging perspectives on key indicators used to explore the Target Need Area. Key indicators are presented in the chart along with a brief summary conclusion based on an analysis of patterns of convergence between different perspectives used in this study. Key indicators are pieces of information, facts, or statistics that provide insight into the condition of a Target Need Area in the community. The intent of this section is to summarize the analysis of the key indicators from all the different methods used in this project. Brief findings are found in the left column of the chart. More detailed findings are presented in **Part V. Findings and Conclusions**.

Specific indicators were selected based on previous research. A brief review of key indicators selected for inclusion in this chart follow:

- **Indicators of financial security of Children and Youth**  
Financial security is an important component of a quality life. Although poverty does not necessarily cause social ills, it is related to the risk factors for many issues addressed by other indicators. These issues include broken families, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, crime, teen pregnancy, and readiness to learn. Children who experience having their basic security needs met are more likely to reach their full potential. Financial security for children can be dramatically affected by economic recession. The indicators of financial security of children and youth this report are:
  - Rates of child poverty in the 12CR and in Texas.
- **Indicators of Problematic Behaviors of Children and Youth**  
Behavioral indicators provide important gauges not only for the emotional/behavior health of children but for other indicators groups as well. If measures related to educational achievement, financial and physical security and social well-being are positive, then the result should show a low incidence of negative personal and social behavior. Alternatively if the measures are negative, then a high rate of incidences may be expected. The behavioral indicators selected for this report are:
  - Teen Pregnancy
  - Substance Abuse
  - Criminal Activity
  - Gang Involvement
  - School Failure
- **Indicators of Physical Security of Children and Youth**  
Child abuse and neglect have serious long –term consequences. According to the Center for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey, students who have been physically abused in the past year were three times as likely to have seriously considered suicide, four times as likely to have been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant and nearly seven times as likely to have ever used cocaine than were students who were never physically abused. Serious concerns have been raised about whether Texas Department of Family Protective Services, Child Protective Services have adequate resources

to thoroughly investigate reports of abuse/neglect and effectively intervene when needed. The indicators selected for physical security in this report are:

- Prevalence of Victimization
- Prevalence of Child Abuse
- Prevalence of Supervision and Neglect

- **Indicators of Social and Emotional Wellness of Children and Youth**

Social and emotional well-being sets the stage for life long satisfaction in adaptation to life goals and challenges. The indicators of social and emotional wellness of children and youth selected for this report are:

- Prevalence of Disability
- Prevalence Serious Emotional Problems

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Personal Perspective</b>		<b>Archival Context</b>	
<b><u>Children and Youth</u></b>	<b><u>Citizens<sup>1</sup></u></b>	<b><u>Informants</u></b>	<b><u>Archival</u></b>	<b><u>State/National</u></b>
<b>Population</b> <i>The ratio of adults to child for the 12CR is the same as the state ratio of 2.5 to 1.</i>	Up to 39.5% of households had children aged 0-17.	28% of KI described that they had most contact with issues related to Children and Youth.	Approximate child population ages 0-17 in 12CR is 153,565.	Approximate child population ages 0-17 in Texas is 5,968,378.
<b>Children living in poverty</b> <i>Children in 12 CR are 1.5 times more likely to live in poverty than at the state level. Poverty has an overall effect on all aspects of human adaptive functioning and therefore contributes to many of the other problems faced by Children and Youth.</i>	Up to 17.3% of the citizens reported that their children qualified for government-supplemented childcare.	92% of KI recognize poverty as a community problem in 12CR.	31% of children (0-17 years) in 12CR live in poverty.	20.2% children in Texas live in poverty.
<b>Teen Pregnancy</b> <i>Adolescents and teens in the 12CR are 1.5 times more likely to become pregnant than teens throughout the state.</i>	Up to 9.4% of citizens surveyed had personal experience with experience Teen Pregnancy in their households.	92% of KI recognize Teen Pregnancy as a community Problem in 12CR.	22.3% Teen pregnancy rate in the region..	14.7% State Teen Pregnancy Rate in 2003.
<b>Drug/Alcohol</b> <i>Youth living in the 12CR were admitted for treatment at an average age of one year younger than at the state level. These facts likely underestimate the incidence of alcohol and drug use among children during their middle school years.</i>	Up to 16.2% of citizens surveyed reported children involved with drugs and alcohol.	96% of KI describe drugs and alcohol as community problem for Children and Youth in 12CR	<p>The average age of admissions for treatment in the 12CR is 15 years old;</p> <p>The average age of first time use of drugs, including alcohol, is age 13 in 12CR.</p>	<p>The average age of admissions for treatment in Texas is 16;</p> <p>The average age of first time use of drugs, including alcohol is age 13 in Texas.</p>
<b>Criminal Activity/ Expressing Aggressive behavior toward others</b> <i>While the overall average juvenile arrest rate in 12CR is lower than the state average, several counties (e.g., Aransas and Nueces) had a juvenile crime rate that far exceeded the state level.</i>	<p>Up to 17.3% citizens surveyed report criminal involvement of children in their household.</p> <p>Up to 27% of households reported children having experienced difficulty with expressing aggressive behavior.</p>	<p>83% of KI describe criminal activity of youth as a community problem.</p> <p>84% of KI describe childhood aggression as a community problem.</p>	<p>The rate of juvenile arrests was 83.3/100,000;</p> <p>Two counties had higher rates than state:  Aransas 292/100,000  Nueces 255/100,000</p>	The State rate of juvenile arrests is 218.4/100,000.
<b>School Failure</b> <i>There is often a relationship between</i>	Up to 20.6% of the citizens surveyed reported having children failing school in	90% of KI describe school failure as a community	There is a 6.4% dropout rate in the 12CR.	There is a 6.2% dropout rate in the state of Texas.

<p><i>school failure / underachievement and children living in impoverished communities. Nonetheless, overall school failure rates in the 12CR are consistent with statewide rates.</i></p>	<p>their household.</p>	<p>problem</p>	<p>84.35% of the eligible students in the 12CR graduated from high school.</p> <p>91.4% of the fourth graders and 95% of the tenth graders passed the TAAS Reading test,;</p> <p>94.4% of the fourth graders and 92.2% of the tenth graders passed the TAAS Math test.</p> <p>87.4% of the fourth graders and 92.3% of the tenth graders passed the writing portion of the TAAS test.</p>	<p>81.1% of the eligible students in the state graduated from high school.</p> <p>92.0% of the fourth graders and 94.3% of the tenth graders passed the TAAS Reading test.</p> <p>93.7% of the fourth graders and 91.7% of the tenth graders passed the TAAS Math test.</p> <p>89.3% of the fourth graders and 90.9% of the tenth graders passed the writing portion of the TAAS test.</p>
<p><b>Serious Emotional problems</b> <i>The emotional stability of children in the 12CR merits a priority of concern. Up to 15.1% of the citizens described members of their household who had serious emotional problems. This problem, when left unaddressed, often results in tragic consequences. Teens in 12CR are 1.5 times more likely to commit suicide than teens at the state level.</i></p>	<p>Up to 15.1% citizens report having a family member with serious emotional problems.</p>	<p>82% of KI described the incidence of teens with serious emotional problems as an issue in their communities.</p>	<p>The rate of suicides between the ages of 15 and 24 in the 12 CR was 14.7/100,000.</p>	<p>The rate of suicides between the ages of 15 and 24 in Texas was 9.6/100,000.</p>
<p><b>Coping with physical disability</b> <i>Children in the 12CR have a higher rate of physical disabilities (7.5%) when compared to state levels of 6.9%. This is consistent with the general principle that physical disabilities</i></p>	<p>Up to 14% are needing to cope with a physical disability.</p>	<p>67% of KI describe coping with a physical disability as a community challenge.</p>	<p>11,470 children in the 12 CR are reported to have a disability, about 7.5% of child population</p>	<p>410,150 (6.9% of total child population) in Texas suffer from disabilities.</p>

<p><i>are more pronounced in environments that have scarce resources for managing them. Children growing up in impoverished situations are more likely to exhibit the symptoms of a physical disability.</i></p>				
<p><b>Gang Involvement</b> <i>Children are actively participating in gang related activities in the 12CR. Most tragically, 132 youth were involved in gang related violent crimes in the 12 CR. 18 young people were involved in juvenile violent related deaths in 2001 were involved in violent deaths. Gang activity drains the already limited resources of a community. Gang involvement is often attributes for school failure, drug-related crimes and violent death rates.</i></p>	<p>Up to 11.7% of citizens describe a household member who is involved in a gang.</p>	<p>78% describe gang involvement as a community problem.</p>	<p>There were 132 youth involved in juvenile violent crimes and 18 involved in juvenile violent deaths in 2001 in 12CR.</p>	<p>3000 gangs in Texas; 97,600 gang members in Texas.</p> <p>There were 5243 individuals involved in juvenile violent crimes and 5711 in juvenile violent deaths in 2001 in Texas.</p>
<p><b>Enrichment School Programs</b> <i>Many children spend their free time with family members. Relatively few spend time in organized enrichment activities. Children need extra familial stimulation to develop an array of life skills. Children benefit from organized after-school activities that provide both academic and social enrichment opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Up to 80.9% of Children 6-10 spend most of their free time with family members;</p> <p>Up to 70.5% of children 11-17 spend most of their time with family members;</p> <p>Up to 33.3% spend time in organized sports, or after school activities.</p>	<p>19% of KI report that services for children and Youth are unavailable and difficult to access.</p> <p>The reported priority of needed services by KI was:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Middle School (11-13)</li> <li>2. High School (14-17)</li> <li>3. Early childhood (0-6)</li> </ol>	<p>21.3% of children in the 12CR attend a public Pre-Kindergarten program</p> <p>19.7% of children in the 12CR attend a Head Start Early education program.</p>	<p>20.6% of children in Texas attend a public pre-kindergarten program.</p> <p>Only 9.3% of children in Texas attend a Head Start early education program.</p>
<p><b>Victimized/Bullied or harassed</b> <i>Children need to feel safe in order to reach</i></p>	<p>Up to 16.2% of citizens describe that Children and Youth in their homes have currently been bullied or</p>	<p>78% of KI describe bullying as a community problem.</p>	<p>Three counties, Brooks, Kenedy, McMullen and Refugio, have a 0.0 rate of juvenile violent crime arrests.</p>	<p>A rate of juvenile violent crime arrests of 218/100,000.</p>

<p><i>their fullest potential. Children in the 12CR are victimized bullied and/or harassed at a rate that is 25% higher than the state level.</i></p>	<p>harassed</p>		<p>Aransas County has the highest juvenile violent crime arrest rate at 292 per 100,000 with Nueces County following close with an arrest rate of 255.4 juvenile arrests per 100,000.</p> <p>Rate of child violent deaths per/100,000 = 18.7;</p> <p>Rate of teen violent deaths per/100,000 =68.3 in the year 2003.</p>	<p>Rate of child violent deaths per/100,000 = 25</p> <p>Rate of Teen violent deaths per/100,000 = 54.4 in the year 2003.</p>
<p><b>Neglect and supervision</b> <i>Children are neglected or under-supervised in the 12 CR at almost double the rate of the state average. Research on antisocial/juvenile behavior suggests that most juvenile crime is committed during after-school hours when children are unsupervised.</i></p>	<p>Up to 18.5% of households report having to leave children alone or with a sibling under 13 on a regular basis.</p>	<p>92% of KI report that the incidence of ‘latchkey ‘ child care arrangements as a community problem.</p>	<p>7225 victims of child abuse reported 1.3% of population.</p>	<p>184,924 alleged victims of child abuse .69% of population.</p>

<sup>1</sup>Citizen data presented in table represents statistical projections calculated around the actual responses from the telephone survey. The proportion of individuals in the sample ensures reliability of conclusions at the 95% +/- 4.6% margin of error for the 12 county region (12CR). Key Informant data, 12CR archival, state, and national data are all treated as population parameters and therefore the standard error (SE) is considered to be 0.

Additional Statistical Note. Question by question projections describe an estimate of the prevalence of the issue in the population that is represented by the sample surveyed. The standard error (SE) was calculated separately for each question (with N=1000 participants as the sample size the SE ranges from about 1% to 1.8%). To calculate the margin of error of any survey response it is customary to calculate a confidence interval, which specifies the best estimate of the lower and upper value of the population value (i.e., the value that would be obtained if EVERY citizen was polled). To validate the reliability of the confidence interval, a conservative scalar value of 3 was used (z =2.57 is often used but is less conservative). Thus the projections are described as the actual response +/- 3\*(standard error). The projections are presented only for the upper range hence the phrase (UP to x% of Citizens). This reflects the upper limit of personal concern with a particular issue if the entire population of citizens were polled. The projections are calculated to be reliable 99% p< .01. For example, in our random sample of 1000 citizens 57% said they were married. If we were to interview everyone in the 12CR we might expect 57% +/- 4.7% or UP to 61.6% of the general population to be married. We would expect to be accurate over 99% of the time with this prediction.

## Part II. Archival Analysis

**Part II. Archival Analysis** is a synthesis and update of previous research concerning the Target Need Area. An extensive review has been conducted and pertinent findings are detailed in this section along with a brief narrative. The intent of this section is to provide a wider context for considering the issue. Primary data sources are provided here and also in the **Sources** section at the end of the report. Readers are encouraged to consult these primary sources for more details.

According to the last census, 57% of the total number of children in the 12 county area reside in Nueces County. About one third of the children in all areas are between the ages of 0-5 (33%), a third between the ages of 6-11 (33%), with the remaining evenly split between the ages of 12-14 (17%), and the ages of 15-17 (17%). Children in the region are younger and most are under the age of 11.

County	Total Child Population	Ages			
		0-5	6-11	12-14	15-17
<i>Aransas</i>	5,278	1,461	1,786	1,004	1,027
<i>Bee</i>	7,476	2,349	2,452	1,294	1,381
<i>Brooks</i>	2,430	765	832	403	430
<i>Duval</i>	3,801	1,161	1,269	680	691
<i>Jim Wells</i>	12,394	3,908	4,107	2,160	2,219
<i>Kenedy</i>	115	42	37	18	18
<i>Kleberg</i>	8,383	2,865	2,674	1,385	1,459
<i>Live Oak</i>	2,677	712	925	501	539
<i>McMullen</i>	196	42	58	51	45
<i>Nueces</i>	88,005	28,970	29,150	14,825	15,060
<i>Refugio</i>	1,991	566	670	382	373
<i>San Patricio</i>	20,819	6,525	7,146	3,545	3,603
<i>Texas</i>	5,968,378	1,980,437	2,010,713	988,632	988,596

Source: State of Texas Children 2003 (2000)

[http://factbook.cppp.org/county\\_select.asp](http://factbook.cppp.org/county_select.asp)

Children make up a substantial proportion of the individuals in poverty. The state-wide average of the population in poverty of persons under 18 years is 20.2%. All but one county of the 12 county area have rates of children in poverty above the state average. More than half of the children in Duval County live below the poverty level (51.7%). The median for the 12 county areas is 26.4% meaning that this percentage of children in the area lives in poverty. The US Department of Agriculture estimated that in 1999, almost 40,000 children in the region lived in poverty.

<b>People in Poverty</b>		
<b>Area</b>	<b>Related children under 18 years</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<i>Aransas</i>	1,636	31.0
<i>Bee</i>	2,451	33.8
<i>Brooks</i>	1,281	51.7
<i>Duval</i>	1,346	35.9
<i>Jim Wells</i>	3,837	31.8
<i>Kenedy</i>	17	15.6
<i>Kleberg</i>	2,976	35.5
<i>Live Oak</i>	605	22.2
<i>McMullen</i>	56	28.6
<i>Nueces</i>	20,822	24.0
<i>Refugio</i>	491	24.2
<i>San Patricio</i>	4,813	23.5
<i>Texas</i>	1,162,141	20.2

Source: Economic Research Service/US Department of Agriculture (1999)

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/povertyrates/PovListPct.asp?ST=TX&view=Percent>

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is the monthly cash assistance program for poor families with children under age 18. To qualify, a family of three (usually a mother and two children) may qualify if their gross income is below \$784 a month and assets are worth less than \$1,000. The participants have a limit of four years of cash assistance support. Work is a major component of TANF; adult recipients with a child over age one are required to participate in a work activity. Recent years have experienced a decrease in families receiving this assistance, however any decrease is likely the result of policy factors rather than decreases in need.

In the Coastal Bend area, the percentage of children receiving cash assistance ranges from the high of 24.1% in Brooks County to no children in Kenedy County. The median for children receiving social assistance for the area is 7.25%, above the State of Texas average of 4.3%.

<b>Counties</b>	<b>TANF Recipient (Children)</b>
<i>Aransas</i>	9.2%
<i>Bee</i>	7.0%
<i>Brooks</i>	24.1%
<i>Duval</i>	13.9%
<i>Jim Wells</i>	9.4%
<i>Kenedy</i>	0%
<i>Kleberg</i>	9.7%
<i>Live Oak</i>	5.2%
<i>McMullen</i>	0.5%
<i>Nueces</i>	7.5%
<i>Refugio</i>	7.6%
<i>San Patricio</i>	6.8%
<i>Texas</i>	4.3%

Source: State of Texas Children 2003 (2001)

<http://factbook.cppp.org/>

The Food Stamp Program is a federal food assistance program that enables low-income families to buy nutritious food with coupons and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Recent years have also witnessed a decline in families receiving food stamps, however, the decline is likely the result of cuts in welfare funding rather than any decrease in need.

In all but two counties of the 12 county areas, children receive food stamps at well above the state average of 9.3%. Brooks County has 41.6% of its children receiving food stamps. Duval, Jim Wells and Kleberg counties have about one quarter of their children on food stamps (26.1%, 25.2% and 24.5% respectively). Refugio (18.3%), Nueces (17%), Bee (17%), Aransas (16.4%), and San Patricio (16.3%) experience levels close to the area median of 16.7% of children on food stamps. Ten counties have children on food stamps at a rate above the rate for the State of Texas, and in most cases, well above the state rate.

<b>Counties</b>	<b>Food Stamp Recipients (Children)</b>
<i>Aransas</i>	16.4%
<i>Bee</i>	17.0%
<i>Brooks</i>	41.6%
<i>Duval</i>	26.1%
<i>Jim Wells</i>	25.2%
<i>Kenedy</i>	1.7%
<i>Kleberg</i>	24.5%
<i>Live Oak</i>	11.7%
<i>McMullen</i>	1.5%
<i>Nueces</i>	17.0%
<i>Refugio</i>	18.3%
<i>San Patricio</i>	16.3%
<i>Texas</i>	9.3%

Source: State of Texas Children 2003 (2001)

<http://factbook.cppp.org/>

Six of the 12 area counties have a percentage of children that attend a subsidized childcare center greater than the state percent of 5.0%, with about ten percent of the children in Bee (10.6%) and Nueces (9.3%) utilizing subsidized day care. Six of the counties have a percentage of children that attend public pre-K greater than the state percent of 20.6%. Almost two-thirds of the children in Kenedy County (64.7%), half of Duval County children (50.5%) and a significant portion of Kleberg County (39.7%) children attend public pre-K. Ten of the counties have a percentage of children that participate in a Head Start Program in the area greater than the state percent of 9.3%, with Brooks County (46.1%), Refugio County (42.0%) and Bee County (40.4%) experiencing particularly high rates of children attending the Head Start programs.

<b>Early Childcare and Education</b>			
County	Subsidized Childcare	Public Pre-K	Head Start
<i>Aransas</i>	4.4%	13.6%	15.0%
<i>Bee</i>	10.6%	9.6%	40.4%
<i>Brooks</i>	1.6%	21.4%	46.1%
<i>Duval</i>	3.1%	50.5%	30.5%
<i>Jim Wells</i>	6.8%	16.9%	20.7%
<i>Kenedy</i>	7.3%	64.7%	0.0%
<i>Kleberg</i>	6.9%	39.7%	26.8%
<i>Live Oak</i>	0.3%	8.4%	17.7%
<i>McMullen</i>	0.0%	31.3%	0.0%
<i>Nueces</i>	9.3%	21.1%	11.8%
<i>Refugio</i>	2.1%	8.5%	42.0%
<i>San Patricio</i>	5.4%	24.6%	18.6%
<i>Texas</i>	5.0%	20.6%	9.3%

Source: State of Texas Children 2003 (2001)

[http://factbook.cppp.org/county\\_select.asp](http://factbook.cppp.org/county_select.asp)

The percentage of pregnancies for teen mothers compared to mothers in the area counties ranges from about 18% to 29%, well above the rate for the State of Texas at 14.7%. (Kenedy County had none). The median rate for teen pregnancies for the 12 county area is 22.2%. The percentages of pregnancies to single teens ranges from about 13% to 23% for the twelve county area.

<b>Teen Pregnancy</b>		
County	Teen Pregnancy	Single Teen Pregnancies
<i>Aransas</i>	24.2%	17.7%
<i>Bee</i>	23.8%	19.0%
<i>Brooks</i>	28.6%	21.8%
<i>Duval</i>	27.2%	23.1%
<i>Jim Wells</i>	22.7%	18.3%
<i>Kenedy</i>	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Kleberg</i>	19.5%	14.8%
<i>Live Oak</i>	19.4%	13.2%
<i>McMullen</i>	20.0%	20.0%
<i>Nueces</i>	17.8%	14.4%
<i>Refugio</i>	26.7%	22.9%
<i>San Patricio</i>	21.8%	17.0%
<i>Texas</i>	14.7%	10.0%

Source: State of Texas Children 2003 (2001)

[http://factbook.cppp.org/county\\_select.asp](http://factbook.cppp.org/county_select.asp)

In 2000, the total number of births to teen mothers (younger than 18) in the 12 county area was 686; 374 were in Nueces County, 104 in San Patricio County and 65 in Jim Wells County.

<b>Nativity Rate</b>	
County	Adolescent Mothers <18
<i>Aransas</i>	17
<i>Bee</i>	36
<i>Brooks</i>	17
<i>Duval</i>	15
<i>Jim Wells</i>	65
<i>Kenedy</i>	0
<i>Kleberg</i>	33
<i>Live Oak</i>	9
<i>McMullen</i>	0
<i>Nueces</i>	378
<i>Refugio</i>	12
<i>San Patricio</i>	104
<i>Area</i>	686
<i>Texas</i>	20,752

Source: Texas Department of Health (2000)

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/dpa/CSHDPA00.HTM>

Measure of children’s security include the incidences of documented abuse and the number of children living in shelters provided in cases of family violence. The median rate for confirmed cases of abuse for the 12 county area is 11.2 per 1,000, above the state rate of 7.9 per 1,000. Nine of the counties have victims of abuse confirmed at a rate above the state rate of 7.9 per 1,000, with Brooks County experiencing a rate of almost three times the state rate at 21per 1,000 and Kleberg having a rate of 19.8 per 1,000. Children living in family violence shelters at a rate greater than the state rate of 2.8 per 1,000 include three of the area counties, Nueces (4.4 per 1,000), Brooks (3.3 per 1,000) and Refugio (3.5 per 1,000).

<b>Children’s Security</b>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Confirmed Victims of Abuse (rate per 1,000)</b>	<b>Children in Family Violence Shelters (rate per 1,000)</b>
<i>Aransas</i>	11.7	0.8
<i>Bee</i>	10.9	1.9
<i>Brooks</i>	21.0	3.3
<i>Duval</i>	13.4	1.3
<i>Jim Wells</i>	10.1	0.6
<i>Kenedy</i>	0	0
<i>Kleberg</i>	19.8	0.7
<i>Live Oak</i>	7.3	0
<i>McMullen</i>	10.4	0
<i>Nueces</i>	13.6	4.4
<i>Refugio</i>	7.9	3.5
<i>San Patricio</i>	12.0	2.6
<i>Texas</i>	7.9	2.8

Source: State of Texas Children 2003 (2001) Abuse (2002)  
[http://factbook.cppp.org/county\\_select.asp](http://factbook.cppp.org/county_select.asp)

Below is a chart that displays teens at risk showing the rate per 100,000 of Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests. Four counties, Brooks, Kenedy, McMullen and Refugio, have a 0.0 rate of juvenile violent crime arrests. Aransas County has the highest juvenile violent crime arrest rate at 292 per 100,000 with Nueces County following close with an arrest rate of 255.4 juvenile arrests, both above the state rate of 218 per 100,000. The median juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes is 83.35 per 100,000.

<b>Teens at Risk</b>	
County	Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests (Rate per 100,000)
<i>Aransas</i>	292.0
<i>Bee</i>	187.2
<i>Brooks</i>	0.0
<i>Duval</i>	177.5
<i>Jim Wells</i>	131.6
<i>Kenedy</i>	0.0
<i>Kleberg</i>	77.2
<i>Live Oak</i>	89.5
<i>McMullen</i>	0.0
<i>Nueces</i>	255.4
<i>Refugio</i>	0.0
<i>San Patricio</i>	64.9
<i>Texas</i>	218.4

Source: State of Texas Children 2003 (2001) [http://factbook.cppp.org/county\\_select.asp](http://factbook.cppp.org/county_select.asp)

The following chart shows the rate of children with disabilities as compared to the entire population. The median percentage of disabled Children and Youth in the 12 county area almost mirrors the state percentage, although the individual rate for Aransas County is higher (11%).

<b>Disabled Children</b>	<b>5 to 20 years</b>
Aransas	11.0%
Bee	7.4%
Brooks	8.0%
Duval	7.0%
Jim Wells	5.9%
Kenedy	7.6%
Kleberg	8.5%
Live Oak	7.1%
McMullen	5.2%
Nueces	8.5%
Refugio	8.0%
San Patricio	8.2%
Texas	7.9%

Data Source: The [Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer](http://txsdc.utsa.edu/data/census/2000/sf3/desctab/county/tab-014_.txt) (2000) [http://txsdc.utsa.edu/data/census/2000/sf3/desctab/county/tab-014\\_.txt](http://txsdc.utsa.edu/data/census/2000/sf3/desctab/county/tab-014_.txt)

The 2000 census determined that in the 12 county area, 11,470 individuals between the ages of 5 and 20 years were disabled. A full 60% of the disabled youth in the area reside in Nueces County.

<b>Disability Status</b>	
County	5-20 years with Disabilities
<i>Aransas</i>	542
<i>Bee</i>	505
<i>Brooks</i>	177
<i>Duval</i>	235
<i>Jim Wells</i>	648
<i>Kenedy</i>	8
<i>Kleberg</i>	717
<i>Live Oak</i>	182
<i>McMullen</i>	10
<i>Nueces</i>	6,810
<i>Refugio</i>	149
<i>San Patricio</i>	1,487
<i>Area</i>	11,470
<i>Texas</i>	410,150

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/>

### **Part III. Citizens' Perspectives**

**Part III. Citizens' Perspectives** contains some of the results of the 1000+ random telephone surveys, the 18 Community Listening sessions, and the 18 Community Response sessions. The highlights of these components of the study are detailed in the next section. For more detailed information about the survey results or the community sessions, the reader should consult the appendices of this report.

Where children spend most of their time when not with their parents is an indicator of extra-familial social enrichment opportunities. For parents who have children under the age of 10, most reported that when their children were not with them, the children spent the majority of their time with their grandparents or with other adult relatives (66%). In some cases, children spent their time with babysitters who were older siblings (11%). Other responses indicated that children also spent time in day care (7%), with unrelated adults or older kids (2%) and with other children in the neighborhood playing (2%).

**Randomly selected citizens who had one or more children less than 10 years of age reported:  
Where do the children spend most of their time on weekdays after school when not with their parents?**

Grandparents/other adult relatives	66%
Older brothers/sisters baby-sitting	11%
In a family day care	2%
In a child care center	5%
In a supervised after-school activities or summer program	0%
Unrelated adults or older kids babysitting	2%
Other children their age in the neighborhood playing	2%
Other	12%

Many studies have shown that for children from ages 11 to 17, time away from parents is when they are most likely to get into trouble. Our survey participants were asked about where their children in this age range spent most of their time. Most of the participants reported that their children spent their time with grandparent or other adult relatives (54%). Many children participate in sports programs, which accounts for their free time away from parents (17%) while some children spend time with other, unrelated adults (11%). Some children spend time in faith-based activities (6%) while others in other, non-sports related organized activities (e.g. Scouts). Three percent of the children aged 11 to 17 spend the majority of their free time doing homework.

**Randomly selected citizens who had one or more youth ages 11 to 17 reported:  
Where do the children spend most of their time on weekdays after school when not with their parents?**

Grandparent/other adult relative	54%
With other adults	11%
Sports	17%
At faith-based organization activity	6%
Other organized activities	6%
Doing homework	3%
Other	3%

Parents were asked about their experiences with various issues and concerns facing Children and Youth. For children up to age 17, more than a quarter of the parents (27%), identified finding a job as a major or minor problem. Also, almost a quarter (24%) reported that expressing aggressive or angry behavior was a problem for their kids. Failing or underachieving in school was identified as a major problem by 12% and a minor problem by 5%. Trouble with the law and drinking or drug use was reported as a problem by 14% and 13%, respectively. Harassment or bullying was identified as a problem by 13% of the parents. Coping with a physical disability was reported as a major problem by 11% of the respondents. Teenage pregnancy was identified as a major problem by seven percent of the parents. Gang activity and running away from home were also reported as minor or major problems.

**Randomly selected citizens who had one or more youth ages 6 to 17 reported:  
Parents rating their experience with the following youth problems:**

	No Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem	NR/DK
Finding a job	72%	8%	19%	1%
Harassment or bullying	87%	2%	11%	0
Being involved with or threatened by a gang	91%	1%	8%	0
Expressing aggressive or angry behavior	76%	12%	12%	0
Failing or underachieving at school	83%	5%	12%	0
Serious emotional problems	88%	2%	10%	0
Running away from home	92%	1%	7%	0
Trouble with the law	86%	6%	8%	0
Drinking or drug use	87%	6%	7%	0
A teenage pregnancy	92%	0	7%	1%
Coping with having a physical disability	89%	0	11%	0

One indicator of children’s health is immunizations against childhood diseases. Texas ranks low on this indicator as compared to other states, however recent efforts and legislation has tried to combat this problem. Nonetheless, six percent of the participants in the survey reported that they had not been able to get their children properly immunized.

**Have you been able to get shots for your children for childhood diseases and other scheduled immunizations?**

Yes	89%
No	6%
NR/DK	5%

**Citizens’ Perspectives: Qualitative Data**

Citizens in the Community Listening Sessions felt that more organized activities for children and youth, particularly after-school activities, were needed. In several counties, Boys and Girls Clubs were cited as being particularly effective, and in counties where no such clubs existed, participants expressed their desire to see them started. Also, participants said that activities for children and youth were often limited athletics, and suggested a greater variety of activities should be available. Many expressed concerns over insufficient childcare, particularly for the working poor or middle class whose incomes were just high enough to prevent them from qualifying for subsidized childcare. Finally, in many counties, participants expressed concern over what they perceived to be growing drug and alcohol abuse among young people.

## Part IV. Key Informant Perspectives

**Part IV. Key Informant Perspectives** contains some of the findings from the survey of Key Informants and also the nine focus groups with some of these individuals. Key Informants are community leaders who can draw on their experiences in the community. For more detailed information about the responses from Key Informants, the reader should consult survey results and qualitative data contained in the appendices of this report.

Key Informants were asked about the issues faced by children and youth in their communities. Most of them reported that drinking or drug use was a problem (96%) and that teenage pregnancy was a problem (93%). Ninety percent agreed that failing at school was a problem. Many found that aggressive, angry behavior (84%), trouble with the law (83%) and emotional problems (82%) were significant issues. Being left alone was an issue identified by 82%, while running away was identified by 58%. Finding a job was reported by 79%. With regard to bullying and gangs, 78% thought that harassment and bullying was a problem, 76% thought gang activity was a problem while 69% thought that being threatened or hurt by gang members was a problem.

Key Informants were asked about their perceptions of the support given to Children and Youth. When asked if children in their communities received adequate support from their families, 44% responded that they did not. When asked if children received adequate support from their schools, 39% responded negatively. Ninety percent of the Key Informants believed that the community needed more information on how to get better involved with youth.

### Key Informants Perspectives of issues faced primarily by children and youth

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Being left alone or unsupervised is a problem	47%	45%	4%	0	4%
Finding a job is a problem	35%	44%	17%	0	5%
Harassment or bullying by other children is problem	27%	51%	10%	0	13%
Being threatened or hurt by gang members is problem	20%	49%	19%	1%	11%
Aggressive/angry behavior toward others is problem	28%	56%	9%	0	8%
Failing or underachieving at school is a problem	42%	48%	6%	0	4%
Serious emotional difficulties are a problem	24%	58%	9%	0	10%
Running away from home is a problem	11%	47%	21%	2%	20%
Gang activity is a problem	31%	47%	21%	2%	8%
Trouble with the law is a problem	27%	56%	11%	0	7%
Drinking or drug use is a problem	52%	44%	2%	0	2%
Teenage pregnancy is a problem	55%	37%	3%	0	5%
Coping with a physical disability is a problem	18%	49%	19%	0	14%
Children and youth in this community receive support and caring from their families	6%	44%	36%	6%	8%
Children and youth in this community receive support and caring from schools	7%	48%	34%	5%	5%
People in this community need more information about how to get involved with youth	47%	43%	4%	1%	4%

Key Informants reported that middle school (ages 11-13) children were most in need of attention in their communities, followed by high school aged children (ages 14-17%), next by preschoolers (ages 0-6) and then by elementary school aged children (ages 14-17).

**Key Informants’ perceptions about which age group is most in need of solutions related to problems faced by children and youth:**

Early Childhood (0-6)	16%
Elementary school (7-10)	11%
Middle school (11-13)	38%
High school (14-17)	26%
Multiple answers	10%

**Key Informant Perspectives: Qualitative Data**

Participants in the Key Informants Sessions felt that key issues for children and youth were the lack of childcare options, especially for the working poor or middle class, and the general lack of supervised after-school activities for young people. Substance abuse among children and teenagers continues to be a concern, along with teen pregnancy:

**Part V. Findings and Conclusions**

- **Indicators of Financial Security of Children and Youth**

- Child Poverty Rates  
Children in 12 CR are 1.5 times more likely to live in poverty than at the state level. Poverty has an overall effect on all aspects of human adaptive functioning and therefore contributes to many of the other problems faced by Children and Youth.

- **Indicators of Problematic Behaviors of Children and Youth**

- Teen Pregnancy  
Adolescents and teens in the 12CR are 1.5 times more likely to become pregnant than teens throughout the state.
- Substance Abuse  
Youth living in the 12CR were admitted for treatment at an average age of one year younger than at the state level. These facts likely underestimate the incidence of alcohol and drug use among children during their middle school years.
- Criminal Activity  
While the overall average juvenile arrest rate in 12CR is lower than the state average, several counties (e.g., Aransas and Nueces) had a juvenile crime rate that far exceeded the state level.

- Gang Involvement  
Children are actively participating in gang related activities in the 12CR. Most tragically, 132 youth were involved in gang related violent crimes in the 12 CR. Eighteen young people were involved violent juvenile deaths in 2001. Gang activity drains the already limited resources of a community. Gang involvement is often responsible for school failure, drug-related crimes and violent death rates.

- School Failure  
There is often a relationship between school failure/underachievement and children living in impoverished communities. Nonetheless, overall school failure rates in the 12CR are consistent with statewide rates.

- **Indicators of Physical Security of Children and Youth**

- Prevalence of Victimization  
Children need to feel safe in order to reach their fullest potential. Children in the 12CR are victimized bullied and/or harassed at a rate that is 25% higher than the state level.
- Child Abuse and Neglect  
Children are neglected or under-supervised in the 12 CR at almost double the rate of the state average. Research on antisocial/juvenile behavior suggests that most juvenile crime is committed during after-school hours when children are unsupervised.

- **Indicators of Social and Emotional Wellness of Children and Youth**

- Children with Disabilities  
Children in the 12CR have a higher rate of physical disabilities (7.5%) when compared to state levels of 6.9%. This is consistent with the general principle that physical disabilities are more pronounced in environments that have scarce resources for managing them. Children growing up in impoverished situations are more likely to exhibit the symptoms of a physical disability.
- Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Problems  
The emotional stability of children in the 12CR merits a priority of concern. Up to 15.1% of the citizens described members of their household who had serious emotional problems. This problem, when left unaddressed, often results in tragic consequences. Teens in 12CR are 1.5 times more likely to commit suicide than teens at the state level.