Alaska’s National Family and Community Ranking: 20/50

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

- 83% of children’s families demonstrate resilience during difficulty
- 2/3 of children live in two-parent families
- 68% of single parent households are headed by women

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

- 10,000 children live in high poverty areas
- 59% of parents say their children live in safe communities

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- 45% of children (ages 6 to 17) volunteered in their community
- 52% of high school students feel they matter to people in their community
- 93% of children (ages 6 to 17) have at least one adult to rely on for guidance
- 3 in 5 children (ages 6 to 17) is bullied

FOSTER CARE

- 2,810 Alaskan children were in foster care in 2016
- 15 per 1,000 children in Alaska
- Alaska’s rate of children in foster care is more than double the U.S. rate
- 6 per 1,000 children in the U.S.

Children in foster care live in a:

- 31% non-relative foster family home
- 28% pre-adoptive home
- 26% relative foster family home
- 15% other

JUVENILE JUSTICE

- 39% of referrals to the Alaska juvenile justice system are for crimes against property
- 70% of juveniles referred to the juvenile justice system are male

Alaska’s rate of youth detained, incarcerated, or placed in a residential facility is higher than the national rate (262 youth per 100,000 in AK compared to 152 youth per 100,000 in U.S.)
ALASKA CHILDREN
Children make up 25 percent of Alaska’s total population.

CHILD POPULATION
- 0 to 4 = 54,115
- 5 to 11 = 73,401
- 12 to 14 = 29,721
- 15 to 17 = 30,090

PERCENT OF CHILD POPULATION (0-19), BY REGION
- Anchorage: 39%
- Gulf Coast Region: 9%
- Interior Region: 15%
- Matanuska-Susitna: 15%
- Northern Region: 7%
- Southeast Region: 10%
- Southwest Region: 9%

RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Law enforcement and public health agencies have a shared interest in poverty, violence and other societal issues. Both fields recommend responding to existing problems while also taking a preventive approach to minimize issues before they start.

INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS
Developing and sustaining partnerships requires strong local leadership from mayors, city managers, city planners, and other elected local officials. A framework for using community and government partnerships to reduce crime includes recognizing crime and safety as a quality-of-life issue, working across jurisdictional boundaries, recognizing the crucial role of political leadership, and developing tools and measures of success that involve the community and victims of crime.

IMPROVE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPACTS
There is a need for further research and inquiry with children and the justice system. More needs to be reported on juveniles transfer into the adult system, the impact sentencing has on adolescent brain development, and sentencing of youth in the adult court.

REDUCE TEEN BIRTH RATE
We should continue implementing evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs, those proven through rigorous evaluation to reduce teen pregnancy and the behavioral risk factors underlying teen pregnancy, or other associated risk behaviors. Any program changes to fill gaps in current evidence-based programs should include interventions for Latino, Alaska Native, American Indian, and LGBTQ youth, for males, and for youth in the foster care and juvenile justice systems.

PREVENT OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT
Family support services often are not consistently available, and/or they are not intensive enough in many areas of Alaska to support in-home safety plans. The state should look for ways to partner with Tribes and nonprofit and support services that prove to make a difference in the lives of children. Diligent follow-through to support utilization of services is important, and any deficiency of the current system should be continually monitored and addressed whenever possible.

INFORMATION SHARING
By analyzing data in new ways, community groups and law enforcement can seek interventions more precisely and support programs that are effective.


All data included in this brief reflects the most recent year available and can be found at http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#AK/. The content is described in detail in the report 2019 Kids Count Family and Community available at http://www.voicesakchildren.org/publications/. Compilation and analysis of the data was completed by the McDowell Group.