



Ensuring our Economic Future

The Status of Young Children in Washtenaw County



The first five years of a child's life are a time of great opportunity. The young child's early experiences and environments directly impact the developing architecture of his or her brain. Everything children see, every word they hear, everything they do from their first breath on shapes the rapidly developing architecture of their brains. We now know that by age four, ninety percent of this architecture will be built and the foundation for language, social behavior, problem solving ability and emotional health will mostly be created...or not...by the time they enter kindergarten.

For our community to make wise decisions about the future of our young children, we need to know what the current status of young children is in Washtenaw County. This report presents current community data in five areas, each of which makes a critical contribution to the optimal brain development, health and early learning of young children.

To be successful in school and in life, Washtenaw County's young children must grow up in an environment that develops self-confidence, positive social and emotional skills, and a love for learning. There is much that our community can do to make sure that every young child has this foundation. Leaders in our communities and in communities across our state are working together in new ways so that every infant, toddler and preschooler has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential.

Community leaders in Washtenaw County who understand the vital importance of investing in young children came together in 2004 to form Washtenaw Success by 6®. In Spring of 2008, Washtenaw Success by 6® received funding from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation and joined the state-wide network of Great Start Collaboratives. Each county collaborative is funded by, and works in partnership with, the Early Childhood Investment Corporation to prepare, and then implement, an *Early Childhood Action Agenda*.



Washtenaw Success by 6®, through the Washtenaw Birth to Six Interagency Coordinating Council, will produce an *Early Childhood Action Agenda*. This Agenda will lay out the actions Washtenaw County needs to take going forward to ensure that every child enters kindergarten healthy and eager to learn.



Background

The economic condition of families is key in allowing them to provide secure, safe and supportive homes and environments for their children. As Washtenaw County faces the current economic downturn, we need to ensure that the basic supports for our children are in place.

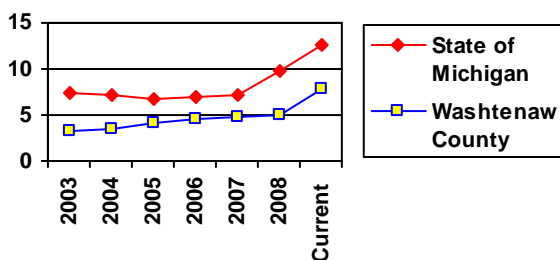
Washtenaw County has a wide range of families in all economic conditions.

Current Context

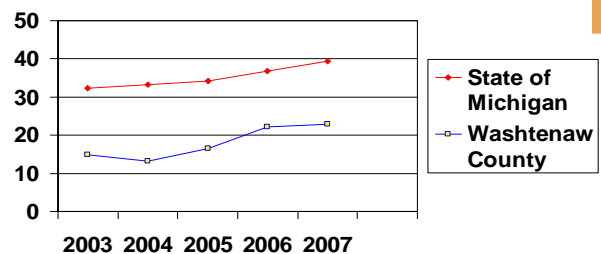
- Washtenaw County has the 6th largest population of children ages 0 to 6 years in the state of Michigan. (Census data)
- Overall, the percentage of children under age 5 in the county who live in poverty is less than the state level. There remain racial differences in this area. In 2000: (Census data)
 - 5% of white children live in poverty
 - 27% of Hispanic children live in poverty
 - 27% of black children live in poverty
- 52% of children (K-12) receive free or reduced lunch- This is higher than the state average, and may reflect our success in encouraging participation. (CEPI data)
- 22.9% of births in Washtenaw County in 2006 were paid for by Medicaid and, although lower than the state average, the trend is steadily upward. (Department of Human Services)



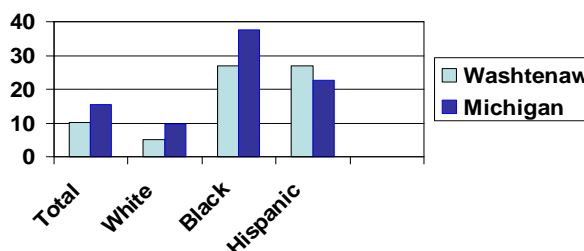
Changes in Unemployment Rate



Percent of Births paid for by Medicaid



Percent of Children Living in Poverty in Washtenaw County



Background

Healthy children are more able to engage in the full range of life experiences that promote early learning. A lack of health care or delays in treating children's health problems can negatively affect their development, sometimes with lifelong consequences.

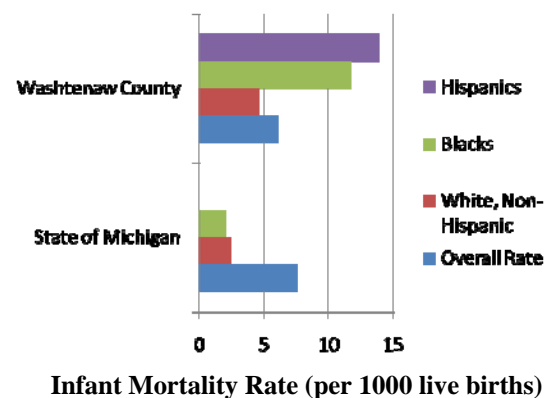
Young children and families with health insurance are more likely to go to the doctor and get help for health conditions before they become emergencies. Young children who have a regular health care provider, or medical home, are more likely to get the high quality preventive care they need to identify and address the common health needs and concerns of early childhood, like immunizations and screenings for developmental, hearing and vision problems.

What's Working: Health Care for Expectant Moms

- During the past six years we have had a drop in the percent of women who had less than adequate prenatal care from 27.8% to 24%. (Washtenaw County HIP Survey)
- In 2006, just 6% of live births in Washtenaw County were to women who smoked during pregnancy. This is the 3rd best rate in the state. (Washtenaw County HIP Survey)

Current Challenges: Racial Disparity, Dental Health Needs, Insurance

- While Washtenaw County's infant mortality rate of 6 per 1000 live births is lower than the state's 7.5 there remain some dramatic differences with regard to race, as the chart shows. (Department of Community Health)
- Dental Health Needs— Information regarding the dental health needs of Washtenaw County's young children is elusive and hard to gather. However, for programs that have established treatment and diagnostic services in this area, such as Head Start, reports indicate a high level of need for both preventative and restorative care throughout our early childhood community. (Washtenaw Success by 6)
- Medicaid Insurance rate - this rate has been steadily increasing in the county. Currently over 20% of the children in the county receive their insurance through Medicaid. (Dep. of Human Services)



Resources available in Washtenaw County



Kelly Stuppel, Children's Health Care Advocate,
Washtenaw Success by 6, 734.544.3079

Washtenaw County Public Health 555 Towner St.,
Ypsilanti, MI 48197 * 734.544.6700

The Corner Health Center 47 N Huron St., Ypsilanti, MI
48197 * 734.484.3600

Hope Clinic 518 Harriet St., Ypsilanti, MI 48197 *
734.484.2989

Packard Health Clinic 3174 Packard Road, Ann Arbor,
MI 48108 * 734.971.1073

University of Michigan Health System 1500 E. Medi-
cal Center Drive Ann Arbor, MI 48109 * 734.936.4000

St. Joseph Mercy Health System 5301 McAuley Drive
Ypsilanti, MI 48197 * 734.712.3456

Background

Parents are their children's primary caregivers and foremost teachers. With the demands of today's work world, many young children are cared for by someone other than a parent prior to entering kindergarten. The quality of early care and education – whether it is provided by grandma, a neighbor, the church, or a childcare center – matters. High quality early care and education provides a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for infants and young children. Children who receive high quality early care and education have stronger learning, language and social skills when they enter school.

Children who attend a high quality preschool program in the year or two before kindergarten are better prepared – academically, socially, and emotionally. High quality preschool programs have well-trained staff, small group sizes, language rich environments, and actively engage parents in their children's learning.

What's Working: Communication and Cooperation

- Ongoing communication and collaboration between Head Start and Great Start Readiness has allowed easier access for families to the free preschool that best meets their family's needs.
- During the 2008-2009 school year, Washtenaw County Head Start program served over 650 preschoolers and their families. (Washtenaw County Head Start)
- During the 2008-2009 school year, an additional 400 children received preschool through the Michigan Great Start Readiness Programs throughout the county. (Washtenaw Success by 6)
- The number of children served by Early On (intervention for children with or at risk of delays) is steadily increasing, with over 350 children currently receiving regular therapy and support. (Early On Michigan)

Current Challenge: Demand Exceeds Supply for Affordable Choices

- 60% of the children under age 6 in Washtenaw County have all parents in the labor force. (Census)
- The cost of care averages \$8476 a year per child from birth to six. Significantly higher than the statewide average of \$6,500. (Michigan 4C). For low and middle income families, this is a serious economic challenge.
- There are consistently more children applying for Great Start Readiness Preschool programs and childcare scholarship dollars than can be accommodated. (Washtenaw Success by 6 and Child Care Network)

Resources available in Washtenaw County



Child Care Network 2385 S. Huron Parkway, Suite 2N
Ann Arbor, MI 48104 * 734.975.1840

Head Start 1661 Leforge Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48198
* 734.484.7119

MSU Better Kid Care- Washtenaw County Extension
705 N. Zeeb Road, P.O Box 8645, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107
* 734.997.1678

**School Districts and Non-profits – Early Childhood
Programs and Great Start Readiness Programs:**

Call Washtenaw Success by 6 at 734.994.8100 or visit
www.washtenawsuccessby6.org to find a program convenient to you.

Background

Every infant needs a warm, nurturing and stable relationship with his or her parents and other caregivers to grow into a trusting, curious and confident toddler. Young children who are socially and emotionally healthy are self-confident and enjoy exploring their worlds. Healthy young children can more easily cope with their emotions, control their impulses and form friendships. Success in school requires that children get along well with their classmates, listen and respond to their teachers, and demonstrate an eagerness for learning. Infants, toddlers, and young children, like adults, can develop mental health problems which can hurt their social and emotional development. Early diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems is vital.



What's Working: Low Rates of Abuse and Neglect

- In 2007, 1.4 in 1000 children were substantiated victims of abuse. (Department of Human Services)
- In 2007, 6 in 1000 children were substantiated victims of neglect. (Department of Human Services)
- Although no amount of abuse or neglect can be considered tolerable for a community, both of these numbers represent lower rates than the state of Michigan overall and lower than most other counties.
- Likewise, the rate of children ages 0-5 in foster care in Washtenaw County is 4.2 which is well below the state average of 8.6 and represents one of the lowest rates in the state. (Department of Human Services)

Current Challenges

- The county wide Early-On referral rate is well below the state goal of 1.3% for infants and 2.4% overall for children birth to three. This means that we are not yet reaching all the children who need support. (Early On Michigan)
- Percent of children ages 0-3 receiving public mental health services was .1% as of 2007. (Community Mental Health) Again, we know this is well below the county-wide need.
- There are very few services for mothers dealing with depression and other mental illnesses. A parent's mental health condition has a direct influence on the potential development of the child.
- Diagnosis of Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorders continue to rise, and there are limited community services to provide therapy and parent support. (Washtenaw County Early On)

Resources available in Washtenaw County



Community Support and Treatment Services 555 Towner St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198 * 734.544.3000

Early On 1819 South Wagner Rd., P.O. Box 1406, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1406 * 734.994.8100 ext 1277

Catholic Social Services 4925 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108-1521 * 734.971.9781

Washtenaw Community Health Organization 555 Towner St, Ypsilanti, MI 48198 * 734.544.3000

Background

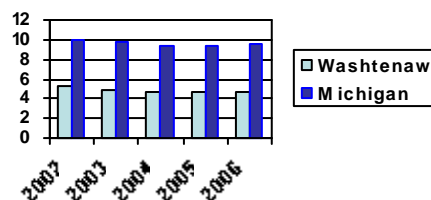
Raising young children is challenging for every family, regardless of education or income. Parents have so many roles that they are called on to play in the lives of their young children. Parents must be caregivers, educators, playmates, role models, providers, and protectors. Knowing what to do in each role can be a difficult and stressful task. Parents greatly benefit from easily accessible parenting information, community resources, and supports.

Parents who are involved in their children's early care and education programs benefit not only their own child, but the others who attend as well. Parents who get involved meet other parents, learn about how their children spend their days, and can build on these relationships and activities at home.

What's Working: Low teen birth rate and existing programs for parents

- Washtenaw County boasts the lowest teen birth rate in the state. Just 4.7% of births are to individuals less than 20 years of age, compared to the state's overall rate of 9.6%. (Department of Community Health)
- The number of repeat births to teens has also seen a decline in recent years and as of 2006 was 13.6%, again lower than the statewide rate of 18.9% for that same year. (Department of Community Health)
- Strong First Steps Washtenaw Programs in all ten school districts provide family support, parent education and developmental assessment for children from birth to six. All are free or offer sliding-scale fees for low and middle income families.
- Washtenaw Success by 6[®] Parent Network provides free age-appropriate information to families throughout the county in the form of mailed parenting packets, monthly newsletters, and a website.

Percent of Births to Teens



Current Challenges:

- The county wide Early-On referral rate is well below the state goal of 1.3% for infants and 2.4% overall for children birth to three. This means that we are not yet reaching all the children who need support. (Early On Michigan)
- Funding for parenting programs is especially vulnerable in both state funding and foundation cycles, and all of the county services are dependent on continued allocations of funds from state and private agencies.

Resources available in Washtenaw County

First Steps Washtenaw * In each school district - <http://www.wash.k12.mi.us/students/earlychild/wisdfsteps.cfm>

Child Care Network * 2385 S. Huron Parkway, Suite 2N Ann Arbor, MI 48104 * 734.975.1840

Lamaz Family Center * 2500 Packard St # 101 Ann Arbor, MI 48104 * 734.973.1014

La Leche League of Ann Arbor * 734.332.9080

Washtenaw Success by 6 * 734.994.8100

University of Michigan Work-Life Resources * 2072 Administrative Services, 1009 Greene Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1434 * 734.936.8677

University of Michigan Health System * 1500 E. Medical Center Drive Ann Arbor, MI 48109 * 734.936.4000

St. Joseph Mercy Health System * 5301 McAuley Drive Ypsilanti, MI 48197 * 734.712.3456

Washtenaw County MSU Extension * 705 N. Zeeb Rd., PO Box 8645, Ann Arbor, MI 48107 * 734.997.1678

Catholic Social Services 4925 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108-1521 * 734.971.9781

Public Libraries

Ann Arbor	734.327.4200	* Chelsea	734.475.8732
Dexter	734.426.4477	* Milan	734.439.1240
Saline	734.429.5450	* Ypsilanti	734.482.4110

Connecting to Resources in the County

Throughout this report on the status of young children in Washtenaw County we have listed resources in each area of attention. Washtenaw County is home to many excellent parent support, family assistance, and child centered services. We encourage you to directly contact any of the organizations listed in this publication for assistance or support. However, there are a number of centralized resources that can help you connect to the right program or organization for your family.

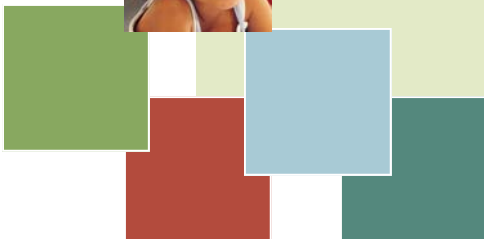
For referral or support around child care call **Child Care Network** at 734-975-1840. They can provide you with child care referrals, licensing information, provider training, information on child care scholarships, and referrals to Head Start, Great Start School Readiness Programs and other programs for your child.

For referral or support around health insurance, Medicaid and MiChild insurance, dental care and treatment, or other health related issues call **Kelly Stuppel, Children's Health Care Advocate**, Washtenaw Success by 6 and Washtenaw County Public Health, 734-544-3079. She can help you with enrollment, help resolve difficulties with DHS, and with your young children's health related needs.

For connection to community organization, playgroups, classes in a wide variety of areas, concerns about developmental delay, information on publicly funded preschool, and a wide range of other early childhood questions call Siân Owen-Cruise, Director of **Washtenaw Success by 6**, 734-994-8100, ext 1277. There are also many resources and connections available on our website: www.washtenawsuccessby6.org.

For connection to the **Washtenaw Great Start Collaborative**, a way to become active and involved in the conversation around supporting our young children within our community, and the sponsor of this status report, call Melissa Pinsky, Co-Director of the Washtenaw Great Start Collaborative, 734-994-8100. ext 2177.

Finally, Washtenaw County has an excellent **211** service. This "first call for help" service has 24 hour live, local operators who can connect you to programs and services designed to support you. They offer referrals for all ages and for a wide range of needs. Simply dial 211 and you will reach them. They will help you find the support and service that you need.



Next Steps for Washtenaw County

This report makes it clear that Washtenaw County has made significant progress, but that we also have significant work to do on behalf of our young children! With your help and this data as a starting point, the Great Start Collaborative in Washtenaw County will lead the development of the *Washtenaw Early Childhood Action Agenda*.

Over the next few months, the Washtenaw Great Start Collaborative, with the support of Washtenaw Success by 6, will be conducting a series of community conversations to assess where we are in meeting our commitment to young children, and what our community priorities for continued improvement should be.

If you would like to participate, please contact Melissa Pinsky at 734-994-8100, ext 2177 or mpinsky@uwwashtenaw.org to find a conversation convenient for you. They are also listed on our website: www.washtenawsuccessby6.org

The conversations will center around answering the following questions and topics:

Can we as a community do better for our youngest citizens?

Why do these data findings look the way they do?

What is causing these conditions?

What assets in our community do we have that can help?

How are we using the assets that we already have to meet the needs of Washtenaw County families?

What *assets do we need* that we do not currently have?

What do we need to do in Washtenaw County to assure that *every* young child arrives at kindergarten healthy, safe, and eager to succeed in school?



Washtenaw
SUCCESS BY 6®



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