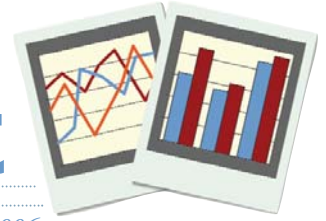




The KIDS COUNT
Data Snapshot series
is a project of the
Annie E. Casey
Foundation

data snapshot

March 2006



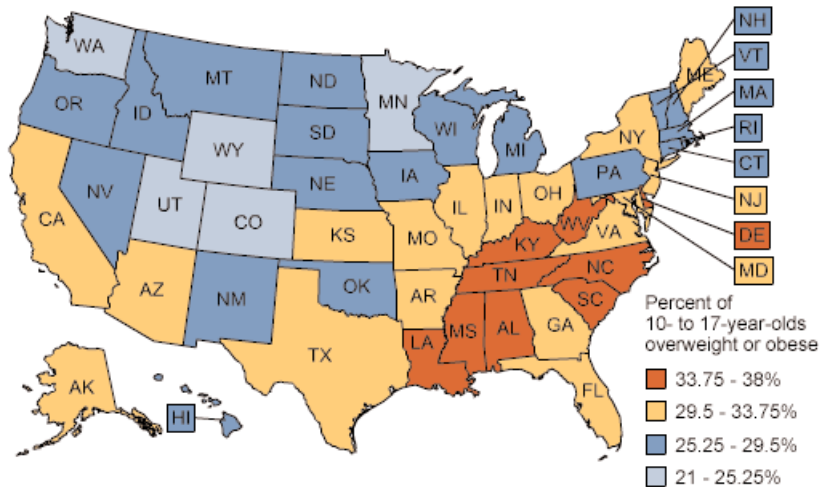
State Differences in Rates of Overweight or Obese Youth

Data available in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT State-Level Data Online System indicates that the problem of obese and overweight youth is not an equal problem for all families in the United States. According to the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health, approximately ten million or 31 percent of U.S. children and youth ages 10 to 17 are overweight or obese. This incidence varies across gender, race, income, and geography. Overall, KIDS COUNT data show that the eight states with the highest rates of overweight or obese youth also have high rates of childhood poverty and generally score low on measures of child well-being.

The map below shows the states ranked by the percent of 10- to 17-year-olds who are overweight or obese. These figures reflect the variation across the country. See definition of overweight or obese in the box at the end of this document.

Figure 1
Percent of
10- to 17-year-olds
who are overweight
or obese.

Source: KIDS COUNT
analysis of the 2003
National Survey of
Children's Health.



Data Highlights

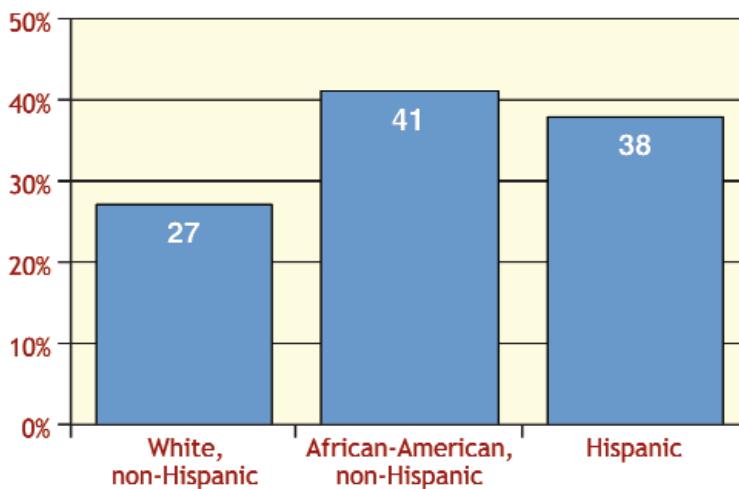
The following data were reported for 10- to 17-year-olds in the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health:

- Kentucky has the highest rate of overweight or obese children, with 38 percent of all children and youth falling into this category.
- Utah has the lowest rate of overweight or obese children, with 21 percent of all children and youth in this category.
- Males are more likely to be overweight or obese than females (35 percent compared to 26 percent respectively).

- African-American and Hispanic children and youth are more likely than white children to be overweight or obese (41 percent for African-American, non-Hispanic children; 38 percent for Hispanic children; and 27 percent for white, non-Hispanic children).

Figure 2
Percent of
10- to 17-year-olds
who are overweight
or obese,
by race/ethnicity.

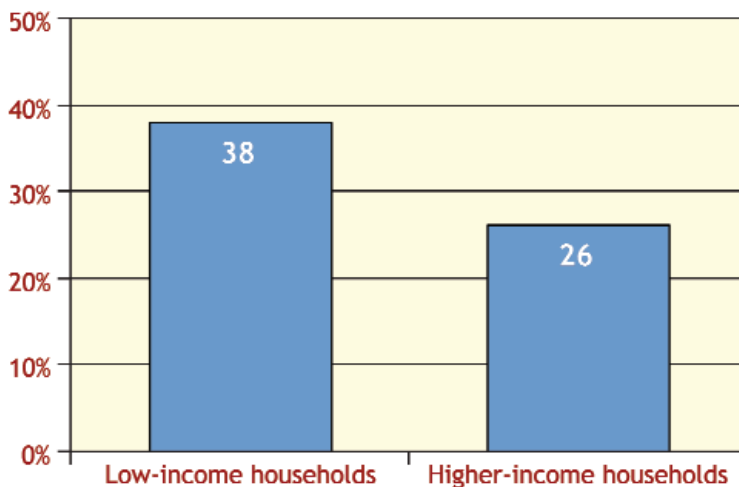
Source: KIDS COUNT
 analysis of the 2003
 National Survey of
 Children's Health.



- Children in low-income households (incomes under 200 percent of the poverty level) are more likely than those living in higher-income households (over 200 percent of poverty) to be overweight or obese (38 percent versus 26 percent respectively). In 2003, 200 percent of the federal poverty level for a family of four was \$37,800.

Figure 3
Percent of
10- to 17-year-olds
who are overweight
or obese,
by household
income level.

Source: KIDS COUNT
 analysis of the 2003
 National Survey of
 Children's Health.



Background on Overweight or Obese Children

Since 1970, the prevalence of obesity among adolescents ages 12 to 19 in the United States has more than doubled; it has almost tripled for children ages 6 to 11. Children who are overweight are at heightened risk for poor health outcomes, including the following:

- High cholesterol and high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem.
- Becoming overweight or obese adults, and therefore being at higher risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and several types of cancer.

Healthy eating and regular physical activity can lower the risk of becoming overweight and developing related diseases. Nationally, about half of all children ages 6 to 17 go without sufficient daily exercise.

How Your State Ranks

The table below shows the U.S. states ranked by the percent of 10- to 17-year-olds who are overweight or obese.

Figure 4
Percent of
10- to 17-year-olds
who are
overweight or
obese.

*Source: KIDS COUNT
 analysis of the 2003
 National Survey of
 Children's Health.*

Rank		
	United States	31%
1	Utah (best)	21%
2	Colorado	22%
3	Wyoming	23%
4	Minnesota	24%
5	Washington	25%
6	South Dakota	26%
6	Idaho	26%
6	Vermont	26%
6	Iowa	26%
6	Oregon	26%
6	Nebraska	26%
12	Nevada	27%
12	Connecticut	27%
12	Rhode Island	27%
12	New Hampshire	27%
12	Hawaii	27%
12	North Dakota	27%
12	Montana	27%
19	Oklahoma	28%
20	Pennsylvania	29%
20	Wisconsin	29%
20	New Mexico	29%
20	Massachusetts	29%
20	Michigan	29%
25	Maine	30%
25	Maryland	30%
25	Arizona	30%
25	Ohio	30%
25	Virginia	30%
25	California	30%
25	Kansas	30%
32	New York	31%
32	Alaska	31%
32	Illinois	31%
32	Missouri	31%
36	New Jersey	32%
36	Florida	32%
36	Georgia	32%
36	Texas	32%
40	Indiana	33%
40	Arkansas	33%
42	North Carolina	34%
43	Delaware	35%
43	Tennessee	35%
43	Alabama	35%
46	Louisiana	36%
46	South Carolina	36%
46	West Virginia	36%
49	Mississippi	37%
50	Kentucky (worst)	38%
NR	District of Columbia	40%

Find out how your state rates in KIDS COUNT State-Level Data Online:

- ***Rates of Overweight or Obese Youth by Gender for Ages 10 - 17***
(http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/compare_results.jsp?i=105)
- ***Rates of Children and Teens Not Exercising Regularly for Ages 6 - 17***
(http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/compare_results.jsp?i=107)

Many of the state KIDS COUNT grantees have produced state reports focused on the issue of childhood obesity. Visit the KIDS COUNT issues library (<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/kcnetwork/issues/>) for more information.

What You Can Do

Many states are starting to address problems of childhood obesity through policies and programs in schools and in communities. These include physical education requirements and nutritional standards for food sold on school campuses. The following resources provide materials and education to prevent childhood obesity:

- ***Top 10 Key Strategies to Prevent Obesity***
(<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/keystrategies/index.htm>) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has outlined a variety of strategies to help prevent children from becoming overweight and to keep overweight children from becoming obese adults.
- ***Policy Matters – School Health and Nutrition Policies by State***
(<http://www.policymatters.us/>) The Policy Matters report, released by the Center for the Study of Social Policy in January 2006, assembles and presents research in a variety of areas important to a family opportunity and stability including a section on State School Health and Nutrition Policy.
- ***The Future of Children Journal Focusing on Childhood Obesity***
(<http://www.futureofchildren.org>) The next volume of The Future of Children, “Childhood Obesity” (Vol. 16, No.1) will be available in spring 2006.

Sources:

Annie E. Casey Foundation’s analysis of the National Survey of Children’s Health, 2003. www.childhealthdata.org

The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, School of Public Health and Health Services, The George Washington University Medical Center, March 2005, “Childhood Overweight What the Research Tells Us,” accessed at www.healthinschools.org (December, 2005)

U.S. Surgeon General, Overweight and Obesity: Health Consequences, accessed at www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_consequences.htm (December, 2005)

The Centers for Disease Control, Health Topics: Childhood Obesity, accessed at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/obesity/index.htm (December, 2005)

About the KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot Series:

The Data Snapshot series highlights specific indicators of child well-being contained in the KIDS COUNT State-Level Data Online system (www.kidscount.org/sld).

KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States.

KIDS COUNT exemplifies the Foundation’s commitment to using the best available data to measure the well-being of children and to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children.

Definition of Overweight or Obese Children

The state-level data used here come from the National Survey of Children’s Health. The National Survey of Children’s Health uses height and weight, as reported by the parent or most knowledgeable adult, to determine a child’s Body Mass Index, or BMI, which is used to determine if a child is overweight. The BMI thresholds are age- and gender-specific. For purposes of this report, children between the 85th and 95th percentile BMI-for-age are categorized as “overweight,” and children at or above the 95th percentile BMI-for-age are characterized as “obese.”