

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:

Prepared on: 02/13/06
Department Name: Social Services
Department No.: 044
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Placement: Departmental
Estimate Time: 5 min.
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:
Document File Name:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Kathy Gallagher, Director
Dept. of Social Services

STAFF CONTACT: Katharina Zulliger, Coordinator
KIDS Network, 346-8222

SUBJECT: 2005 Children's Scorecard for Santa Barbara County

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

Accept the 2005 Children's Scorecard for Santa Barbara County as produced by the KIDS Network in collaboration with the UCSB Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, the First 5 Children and Families Commission and various county departments and community-based agencies.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 7. A Community that Fosters the Safety and Well-Being of Families and Children.

Executive Summary and Discussion: This is the twelfth annual Children's Scorecard for Santa Barbara County. The Scorecard was developed as a tool to help track and measure our county's progress toward the goal of improving outcomes for children, youth and families. The data are derived from a variety of sources, including state agencies, county departments and community-based organizations. The information is collected, analyzed and prepared by KIDS Network for entry into a centralized database maintained and updated by Dr. Mike Furlong and staff at the UCSB Gevirtz Graduate School of Education. UCSB staff also designs and prepares the layout for the Scorecard, a valuable in-kind contribution to each year's production.

Highlights and Trends:

New in this year's edition:

In addition to knowing about the incidence of undesirable developmental outcomes, such as substance use, antisocial behavior and poor physical and mental health, communities need to know about the health and well-being of their children. Parents and communities do not only want their children to be free of disease or problems, but to thrive, be happy and live productive meaningful lives. By including data about positive youth development, the Scorecard provides information about these positive outcomes as well. One such new indicator is resilience in youth.

Resilience and positive youth development

Students who report high levels of their own internal assets, such as confidence and self-esteem or external resources, such as supportive families and school environments, have much lower rates of reported risk behaviors, particularly using tobacco and marijuana. In addition, they are less likely to engage in binge drinking. Research advancement will continue to develop a more complete understanding of resilience and how it buffers youth against developmental problems and promotes their positive development.

Notable and encouraging findings:

Infant Mortality

The infant mortality rate is an important measure of a region's health and a worldwide indicator of health status and social well-being. Infant mortality rates in Santa Barbara County have been decreasing in the past years, with the lowest rate of 3.6 per 1,000 live births in 2003. The Healthy People 2010 target rate for infant mortality is 4.5 per 1,000 live births. The number is also below the state infant mortality rate of 5.4.

Juvenile Justice

The juvenile felony arrest rate has declined 48% in Santa Barbara County over the past ten years, and was 5% below the statewide average felony arrest rate in 2004. Referrals for more serious felony and misdemeanor offenses have been increasing at a slow rate over the past several years, but the rate of referrals based on population of youth ages 10-17 is still at a 10-year low. Santa Barbara County Probation credits their ability to intervene at an earlier stage and respond to youth who commit infractions and violation of local ordinances. Many other counties do not even accept referrals for these types of offenses.

Remaining challenges:

Overweight in Children

Data from the Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) in our county shows that in 2004, 24 percent of children ages 2 to 4 (8,524) were overweight or at risk of overweight. As children get older, the number of overweight children increases. Data from the California Department of Education (CDE) give the results for the annual Physical Fitness Tests conducted in school districts in Grades 5, 7 and 9. In Santa Barbara County, the averages of the scores for over 8,000 students tested in 2005 showed that 41.3% failed the Aerobic Capacity test and 30.1% were not in the Healthy Fitness Zone for Body Composition.

High Cost of Living

The high cost of living presents significant challenges to low- or moderate-income families in Santa Barbara County. California home prices have more than doubled since late 2001 and families at or below the poverty level have difficulties meeting their basic needs. For example:

- During the 2004-05 school year there were 30,513 or 45% of public school children enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program. Many of these youth reside in the agricultural areas of the County, but there continues to be a sizeable number from the more urban areas of Santa Barbara City.
- With a median annual household income of about \$48,000, the cost of care for an infant/toddler consumes 20% of a typical family's living expenses, and care for two children consumes 32%.

Other findings:

Increased Need for Foster Families

In 2005, 467 children entered foster care, up 28.5% from 2004. Although the number of children in foster care grows, the number of available licensed foster care homes has remained relatively stable, resulting in placement challenges for Child Welfare Services.

The Children's Scorecard is available on-line at:

<http://www.countyofsb.org/kidsnet/2005Scorecard.pdf>

Mandates and Service Levels: No change.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Costs to produce the Scorecard are included in the Dept. of Social Services adopted budget for fiscal year 2005-06.

Special Instructions: After passage by the Board of Supervisors, please send one (1) certified copy of the Minute Order to:

KIDS Network, c/o DSS-SM, Attn. Katharina Zulliger, Coordinator
Dept. of Social Services – SB, Atten. Paula Haines

Concurrence: None

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA:

**ATTEST:
MICHAEL F. BROWN
Clerk of the Board**

By: _____
**Joni Gray, Chair
Board of Supervisors**

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Date: _____