

**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: 01/07/05
Department Name: Social Services
Department No.: 044
Agenda Date: 01/25/05
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: n/a
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:
Document File Name:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Kathy Gallagher, Director
Dept. of Social Services

STAFF CONTACT: Hedy Damery
KIDS Network, 346-8222

SUBJECT: 2004 Children's Scorecard for Santa Barbara County

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

Accept the 2004 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 eleventh 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. This edition of the Scorecard features an enlarged section featuring the initiatives and results from First 5 Santa Barbara County Children and Families Commission.

Highlights and Trends:

As we release Santa Barbara County's newest Children's Scorecard it seems appropriate to take a look at some of the long-term trends in the conditions of children, youth and families. We now have data covering a considerable period of time - some for as much as twelve years. All indicators must be evaluated in the context of our county's ongoing changes in population and socio-economic factors. The Scorecard helps us assess our real progress toward Santa Barbara County's vision for our children.

Notable and Encouraging Results...

- The county can be very proud of its decline in the number and rate of **births to teen mothers** age 10-14 and the steady decline since 1991 in the number of births to mothers age 15-17. While the state's rate for the younger age group nearly doubled, the rate for the older females has declined along with our county. Child birth at such young ages places enormous stress on both mother and child.

Mixed Results...

- The county's **CalWORKs** caseloads have dropped 25% since 1998, the year welfare reform was implemented but have shown an increase of 9% since 2000. This is occurring during a time that the county's population is increasing. However, beginning last year the first families began reaching the five year lifetime eligibility limit, which means that the family in most instances, loses cash assistance. Will these families be able to earn enough to keep their families going?
- Requests for **child care** nearly doubled during the past year, as more families seek quality, affordable and accessible care for their children. While capacity in some family child care homes and centers is growing, it does not keep pace with the growing demand. In addition, child care is a relatively low-wage career field, so providers must struggle to find and keep highly qualified staff.

Areas of Concern...

- The cost of **housing** in the county continues its climb into the stratosphere, with a median home in Santa Barbara now approaching the one million mark, and prices in north county doubling in the past two years. At these levels, businesses and government both struggle to find and hire qualified employees who can surmount this very real barrier to living on the Central Coast.
- The county's **high school drop-out** rate (and the state's) took a jump upward last year, after an eight year steady decline. Given the increase in enrollment, the rate should be going the other direction. Although our schools offer a host of special programs targeting at-risk students, some still fall through the cracks, especially in the critical gap between middle or junior high school and high school. This is where the parent(s)' role in emphasizing the importance of school attendance can make a real difference in a youth's life.

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

<http://www.education.ucsb.edu/schpsych/SBCO-Scorecard/index.html>

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 2004-05.

Special Instructions: After passage by the Board of Supervisors, please send one (1) certified copy of the Minute Order to the KIDS Network, c/o DSS-SM, Attn. KIDS Network Coordinator.

Concurrence: None

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA:

ATTEST:
MICHAEL F. BROWN
Clerk of the Board

By: _____
Susan Rose
Chair, Board of Supervisors

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Date: _____