



Facts about Children in Johnson County

Children ages 0-17:	133,065
Children aged 0-17 below poverty:	8,270
Aged 0-5	3,359
Aged 6-17	4,911

- Children 0-17 account for 26% of the county’s population. They account for 33% of the county’s poor.
- Between 2000 and 2006, the number of children increased by 9%. At the same time, the number of children below the poverty level increased 92%. *(Based on 2006 ACS; poverty was \$17,170 for a family of three.)*
- Very young children are more likely to be poor. 1 in 13 children aged 0-5 is poor. For children aged 6-17, 1 in 20 is poor. For adults, the number is 1 in 23.

Why growing childhood poverty is a concern: Poverty has been linked to greater risk for various negative outcomes, especially for children. Documented risk factors for children include negative consequences for education, such as learning disabilities, grade repetition and lower test scores.

What can be done: One long-term strategy to reduce poverty is to *increase the investment in early learning programs*. An increased investment in high-quality early childhood programs – such as Heart Start, Early Head Start, Parents as Teachers – increases the number of children who have the opportunity to participate and improves the quality of programs to make sure every dollar is being maximized to provide the greatest impact.

- Studies show that high-quality early childhood programs are the BEST way to support improved academic outcomes in K – 12 education. Children who attend early childhood programs are far more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn, read at grade level by third grade, and graduate from high school and even college.
- Ninety percent of children's brain development occurs before age five, but kindergarten starts after a child turns five. By making early childhood education available to all children, we take advantage of a crucial period in their development.
- Decades of research proves that for every \$1 invested in early childhood programs, the state saves \$7.
- For more information on early childhood education, go to www.KansasSchoolReadiness.org.