



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## JACKSONVILLE CHILDREN'S COMMISSION RELEASES 15-YEAR REPORT OF TRENDS AND STATISTICS AMONG JACKSONVILLE YOUTH

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla. Aug. 29, 2007**—Mayor John Peyton, City Council President Daniel Davis and the Jacksonville Children's Commission (JCC) today joined together to release the *2007 Profile Report: Jacksonville Child Trends and Statistics, 1990-2005*.

The *2007 Profile Report* is the third study in a series of reports produced by the JCC that discusses topics relating to youth social and health issues. Important trends related to the well-being and challenges of Jacksonville's children are compared and contrasted from the benchmark year of 1990 to 2005.

"The *2007 Profile Report* provides us with an overall assessment of the challenges and opportunities facing our children over the last 15 years," said Mayor Peyton. "While we can be proud of progress we've made in some areas, there is still tremendous work to be done. This useful information will help us to continue to effectively direct resources to further support the children and families in our community."

The report examines data in the following categories: overall population and child population demographic data, poverty rates, family structure, health, literacy and education, as well as risky behaviors. Key areas such as poverty, population, diversity and violence and crime, were intensely highlighted in the presentation.

As outlined in the report, Jacksonville has improved in some key child well-being indicators such as poverty.

Child poverty has decreased from 18.4 percent in 1990 to 15.4 percent in 2005. Jacksonville has a lower rate of child poverty when compared to the state and nation overall. In addition, African-American children living in poverty fell from 39 percent to 26 percent during that time period.

The data however also shows that Jacksonville is still facing higher percentages of infant mortality, child death (particularly as it relates to violence) and teenage pregnancy than in other parts of the state and across the nation.

Jacksonville also has a continued trend with a higher percentage of single females giving birth than the state and the nation. In fact, in 2005, nearly half of all births were to unwed mothers.

In addition, while most of the U.S. population is aging and children represent a smaller piece of the pie, the number of children in Jacksonville and Florida is actually on the rise. This may

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present implications for future distribution of limited resources and funding for services and programs.

Based on the information gathered, violence and crime have remained an issue among youth from 1990 to 2005. A number of factors contribute to violence and crime among youth including peer pressure, need for attention or respect, early childhood abuse or neglect, witnessing violence at home, in the community or media, low self-worth and having easy access to weapons. (<http://apahelpcenter.org/featuredtopics/feature.php?id=38>).

While homicide is noted as one of the leading causes of death among young people, there are also promising statistics. For example, at the national level, criminal behavior and the number of serious violent crimes committed among juveniles 12 to 17 dropped from 1990 to 2004.

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice data also indicates a 40 percent decline in murder/manslaughter referrals; 72 percent decline in auto theft referrals; 54 percent decline in burglary referrals and a 44 percent decline in armed robbery referrals from 1994-2003.

“We must take the time to learn about the lives of Jacksonville’s children before we can determine the best way to help them develop and thrive,” said Mayor Peyton. “This report tells us who our children are and how their lives are changing.”

A complete copy of the report may be obtained by visiting the JCC Web site, [www.jaxkids.net](http://www.jaxkids.net) (click on *How Are Our Kids Doing?*) or by calling (904) 630-3647.

Founded in 1994, the Jacksonville Children's Commission strives to create positive opportunities for all children by helping them to be well-prepared for life through quality early learning, early literacy, health, nutrition, summer and afterschool programs; promoting supportive and nurturing parenting through family strengthening and parent education programs; and providing help when kids need it through special needs, behavioral health, mentoring and drop-out prevention programs.

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