

## The US and Its Children

A new study by an international organization compares childhood well-being in 30 democratic, free-market and generally high-income countries, including the United States. The results are surprising.

Public spending on children, as well as household income, in the US are among the highest in the developed world. However, when it comes to health, education, and poverty, we are found near the bottom of the ranking. Infant and child mortality are high, as are low birth weight and the rate of births to teenage mothers. In fact, the teen birth rate is over three times higher here than the average. Child poverty is twice as common here than in other industrialized countries. Also, of all thirty countries, children are the least likely to live with both parents if they reside in the US. The US does not earn a "high performing" grade in any of the elements under living standards, education, and protection. The report's authors assert that spending in the earliest years, from birth to age 5, will have the greatest positive impact on child well-being.

The report, "[Doing Better for Children](#)", by the OECD, is available [here](#), as well as the nation-by-nation analysis.

*By Linda Juergens, of Your (Wo)man in Washington, author of Mothers Out To Have Equal Rights, and representative of National Association of Womens' Centers in Washington, D.C. October 18, 2009*