

- About one-quarter of the children who entered kindergarten in 2006 had not received all their immunizations by age 2.
- In 2006, fewer than half of all incoming kindergarteners were ready for school on all aspects of child development measured, and 10% were not ready on any of 20 skills.
- In 2006, just half of all third graders and only 24% of economically disadvantaged third graders in the county scored proficient or better on a standardized English language arts test (a measure of reading proficiency).
- In 2004, about one-quarter of fifth, seventh and ninth graders in the county were overweight or at risk of being overweight, and, in 2006, only about half could meet five of six state fitness standards.
- In 2005-06, one-quarter to one-third of seventh, ninth and 11th graders reported symptoms of depression (i.e., feeling so sad or hopeless for at least two weeks during the previous year that they stopped doing some regular activities).

### Local Action

Public and private organizations across the county are actively leading community initiatives that aim to reduce disparities and improve children's well-being. Examples of such initiatives include efforts to provide health insurance for all children; prevent childhood obesity; improve children's oral health; expand preschool and increase school readiness; promote positive youth development; and advocate for key changes through a Children's Agenda.

For more information, see [www.kidsdata.org/santaclarareport](http://www.kidsdata.org/santaclarareport)

## Important Considerations

A report such as this one, which relies on existing publicly available data, is limited in that it necessarily must examine one issue at a time, even though the problems facing children do not occur in isolation. Children's physical health, academics, emotional health and family life are intricately connected; a change in one area likely will affect other areas.

Similarly, while data and service systems often focus on separate age groups (e.g., 0-5, adolescents, etc.), the different stages of childhood are not separate from each other. Each stage of a child's life builds upon the progress, or lack of progress, in the preceding stage. This continuity of development from infancy to adulthood is difficult to capture in a data report, but recognizing and incorporating this perspective is vital to effective planning for children.

Finally, data generally are used to point out negative outcomes. This approach often is necessary to ensure that problems are addressed, but it also underemphasizes the very real strengths of families and communities that have overcome substantial obstacles.