

Sweet Home, OR

(Linn Co.)

New Era

(Cir. W. 3,695)

FEB 16 2000

Allen's P.C.B. Est 1888

Wonder why it's hard to educate some kids?

On the heels of the state's first report card for its schools, Children First For Oregon has released its annual county-by-county report on the status of children in Oregon.

Its findings help explain why some schools in the state, including Sweet Home High School, face higher than usual

Over Lightly

Alex Paul

drop out rates, discipline problems and other issues that weigh on the daily educational process.

According to the report:

■ Statewide, some 16% of children live in poverty. In 1998 alone, 7,600 children were impacted by the divorce of their parents.

■ More than one-third of Oregon's children (36%) under age 13 spend a portion of their week in paid child care.

■ Some 29% of all births in Oregon between 1996 and 1998, were to unmarried mothers.

■ One of five babies were born to mothers with less than 12 years formal education.

■ In Linn county, some 534 children's parents divorced in 1998 and 30% of babies born here were to unmarried mothers.

■ Only half of the county's kindergarten students were considered ready to learn in all areas of development.

■ Statewide, 16% of women who gave birth between 1996 and 1998 smoked cigarettes during pregnancy. In Linn county, that number was 23%.

■ 5% in Linn county reported using illicit drugs or alcohol during pregnancy. The statewide rate is 2%.

According to Children First, the high school dropout rate in Linn county worsened by nearly a third and remains 29% worse than the state rate.

The juvenile arrest rate in Linn county is significantly worse than the state rate. More than 2,000 teens were arrested in Linn county in 1998.

Far too many children leave home each morning carrying a heavy load.