

Oregon's ^{50th} youngest doing well

But a national survey shows older children slipping against peers in other states.

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Oregon's children are getting off to a good start, but are struggling in later years, according to a new national survey.

The annual "Kids Count" report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows that Oregon:

- Ranked best in the nation for the rate of low-birthweight babies.
- Ranked third in the nation for infant mortality rate.
- Had one of the biggest jumps in the high school dropout rate in the nation, rising from 8 percent in 1990 to 13 percent in 1998.
- Had a 43 percent rise in the share of teens not in school and not working, during the same period, compared with a 20 percent decrease nationally.

"We've made some

Oregon rankings

The Annie E. Casey Foundation ranks states on 10 indicators of child well-being, with 1 being the best. Here's how Oregon ranked nationally for 1998:

- LOW BIRTHWEIGHT BABIES:** 1
- INFANT MORTALITY RATE:** 3
- CHILD DEATH RATE:** 15
- CHILDREN IN POVERTY:** 19
- TEEN DEATH RATE:** 19
- SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES:** 22
- TEEN BIRTH RATE:** 25
- TEENS NOT WORKING OR GOING TO SCHOOL:** 37
- CHILDREN LIVING WITH UNEMPLOYED PARENTS:** 42
- HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS:** 45
- OVERALL RANK:** 20

strides. We've continued to do very well around some early childhood indicators. But we do have some significant challenges," said Marie Hoeven, executive director of Children First for Oregon, a Portland-based group that advocates

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