



## State child welfare 5038 scores inch upward

SALEM (AP) — For the first time, Oregon earned an above-average grade on a watchdog group's annual report card measuring the well-being of children.

Children First for Oregon gave the state a grade of B-, up from a C last year and C- in 1999 in its survey looking at factors such as teen pregnancy, immunization and poverty levels.

But children's advocates warn that the improvement results as much from the economic boom of the 1990s as from investments in programs and services.

"If this slowdown continues, working families who turn to the safety net are going to find fewer resources available," said Marie Hoeven, executive director of Children First.

Many areas that showed improvement still fall short of the state's goals.

"It's certainly not a report card that's worth a bumper sticker about my state being on the honor roll," said Chuck Sheketoff, director of the Silverton-based Oregon Center for Public Policy.