

# State budget crisis

## may hurt children, group says

### Recent improvements in fighting hunger, child abuse and providing health care could be jeopardized

By Kim Sullivan  
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Children First of Oregon, a child advocacy group, recently released a county data book along with a warning: The state's budget crisis will further harm children's health and safety. "Oregon's commitment to all of its children was showing real progress in recent years — with investments in proven, early intervention and prevention. We're about to break that commitment and our kids, families and com-

munities are all going to pay," said Marie Hoeven, Children First's executive director. "Oregon children, already among the hungriest in the nation, are facing increasing danger from child abuse and lack of access to health care."

Key findings include:

Child safety:

- The child abuse and neglect victim rate in Oregon is 9.6 victims per 1,000 statewide with a total of 8,232 identified as victims of abuse and/or neglect. The rate in Lane County is higher, with 13.5 victims per 1,000. (The higher rate may be due to a higher number of assessments.)

- More than 40 percent of Oregon families involved in child abuse and neglect cases are involved with suspected drug and/or alcohol abuse and more than one-third of families have one or more parents involved with a law

enforcement agency.

In Lane County, more than one-third of the families are involved with suspected drug and/or alcohol abuse, law enforcement agencies, domestic violence as well as have one or more parents unemployed.

- Statewide, 51 percent of households in the state have guns and 23 percent of those guns are stored unlocked and loaded. In Lane County, 53 percent of households have guns, with 21 percent stored unlocked and loaded.

Child health:

- 11 percent of births in the state were to teen mothers in 2001. In Lane County: 10 percent.

- 82 percent of mothers begin prenatal care in the first trimester and another 15 percent begin care in the second trimester; 4 percent of mothers have no or very late prenatal care. Locally, fewer mothers received first trimester

care.

- Close to two-thirds of Oregon eighth-graders do not get enough exercise, while 62 percent of eighth-graders report spending two or more hours per day in front of the television, video games or the Internet on an average school day. In Lane County, nearly one-third of eighth-graders were overweight; 57 percent report spending two or more hours in front of the TV or computer on an average school day.

- 12 percent of Lane County mothers report smoking during pregnancy.

- 11 percent of eighth graders report smoking cigarettes in the last month.

- 23 percent of eighth-graders report being diagnosed with asthma.

- 77,000 children in Oregon have no health

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