

# One-third of county's kids in poverty

*Children's advocacy group  
releases annual state report*

*The News-Register staff*

Between 30 and 39 percent of Yamhill County's children are living at or near the poverty level, according to the latest report

by the child advocacy group Children First for Oregon.

But the county is doing well compared to many other parts of the state, the organization says.

It lists just four counties — Columbia, Washington, Clackamas and Benton — with fewer than 30 percent of their children living at or near the poverty level. It lists nine counties with rates of 30 to 39 percent, 16 with rates of 40 to 49 percent and seven with rates exceeding 50 percent.

A family of four is judged to fall below the poverty level if its total household income falls below \$18,400 a year. Children First termed that a very

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modest standard.

Executive Director Marie Hoeven noted that more than one in three Oregon children now live in poverty. She urged legislators and agencies to increase investment in programs to benefit children.

Yamhill County also is relatively well off when it comes to secure parental employment and two-parent households, in comparison to the rest of the state.

Despite an increase in the unemployment rate, 95 percent of its children live in households with at least one working parent.

The county's median household income for families with

children is \$48,770. But many are making do with much, much less.

Education levels remain comparatively low in Yamhill County, and child care availability is rated poor. The organization says 557 local children are living in households considered linguistically isolated because no one over age 14 speaks English fluently.

More suicide attempts were reported among children in the 10-17 age range, but the local teen suicide rate remains below that of the state as a whole.

Gains have been made in reading and math proficiency

among eighth-graders. The county's high school dropout rate also has improved, although it remains above the state average.

Teen pregnancy has declined, as has infant mortality. The county is below the state average for teen pregnancy, but above for infant mortality, despite the improvement.

Fewer women are receiving early prenatal care, which could be affecting the infant mortality rate. The county's rate of abuse and neglect also exceeds the state average and appears to be on an upswing.

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