

Local report on status of children shows

Encouraging numbers

By Mardi Ford
Staff Writer

When it comes to measuring the status of Oregon's children, all measurements are not always equal.

In September, when Children First for Oregon, a non-profit, non-partisan watchdog group, issued its 2004 Report Card, the state's overall grade on the status of children was a D+. Sad news, to say the least.

Adding to the frustration was the delay in receiving any individual county statistics from Children First, since those reports will not be available until the end of the

year, the group stated.

However, the Union County Advisory Commission on Children and Families presented its own report on the local status of children and families to the county commissioners last June.

That report shows that although some areas need improvement, the overall status of kids right here at home has encouraging news.

"We are doing some things right," said Vicki Brogiotti, commission director.

In the 40 trend areas examined by the commission, the 2004 report shows an

improvement in 28 since the 2002 report.

For example, under improving readiness to learn for children entering school in 2004, 85 percent of Union County's children met all six readiness standards as compared to only 59 percent in 2002 — an overall improvement of 25 percent.

Juvenile arrests in Union County also continue to decline, dropping another 6 percent from 21 per 1,000 juveniles in 2002 to 15 in 2004.

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Vicki Brogiotti