

And what will happen to the children?

Children First details needs of children statewide in data book

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In Yamhill County in 2004, nearly one of every five children lived in a home receiving food stamps. On average 22 percent of all children in the county were provided health coverage through the Oregon Health Plan every month. Last year, 10.4 of every 1,000 children in Yamhill County were victims of abuse and or neglect, a rate that is only slightly lower than the statewide 10.8 figure.

These figures are just a few compiled by Children First, a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy program in Oregon. Last week Child First released its data book focusing on the status of children's health and safety in Oregon, to members of the legislature. The group hopes the book will slow the loss of resources provided for children's services.

Once a year Child First publishes the book — which this year includes indicators of health and safety issues at the county level — and a

statewide report card. The report card details the status of children's health and safety, as well as their financial well being, said Robin Christian, executive director of Children First.

"On the report card 12 percent of children under 18 lack health insurance," she said.

"In Yamhill County 11 percent have no insurance. The state benchmark is 8 percent. We are failing (in caring for children's health) both as a state and county."

Children First is a child advocacy group that uses public education, research and community capacity building initiatives to speak to the legislature, media and local communities on behalf of Oregon's children and families through public policy and advocacy, she

said. Christian said in Yamhill County one in every 100 children is a victim of abuse. Available services are reduced, the number of children being abused here is on the rise, said Kathleen Robbins, executive director of Juliette's House, a child abuse assessment center in McMinnville.

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Kathleen Robbins, Juliette's House executive director

"We are seeing child abuse increasing with the reduction in law enforcement and protective services," she said. "It's painful to know that children out there are not being served in a timely manner in the ways they should be."

Robbins said the upcoming legislative session will address these issues. Please see [CHILDREN, pg. A2](#)

