NEWS

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Contact: Nancy Parello, 973-643-3876 or (908) 399-6031

Morris Tops Kids Count Rankings, Cumberland Comes in Last

Morris County ranked number one out of all New Jersey counties in overall child well-being and Cumberland County ranked last, according to the **New Jersey Kids Count** annual rankings released today.

Kids Count compares counties on 15 measures, including child poverty, health, safety and education.

Morris, Hunterdon, Somerset, Bergen and Middlesex were the top five ranking counties, while Cumberland, Atlantic, Camden, Salem and Cape May were the five lowest.

Morris reclaimed the 1st place spot after being edged out by Hunterdon last year. Cumberland remained in last place. All five counties at the bottom of the rankings are located in South Jersey. Passaic, which was among the bottom five last year, inched up to 16th place in this year's rankings. Camden dropped from 16th to 19th.

The reasons counties move up or down the Kids Count rankings vary from county to county. Changes in a particular indicator, such as child poverty, in certain counties can affect the rankings of all counties.

"It is critical to examine child trends in each county to build on progress and target persistent problems," said Cecilia Zalkind, executive director of Advocates for Children of New Jersey, which publishes the Kids Count reports.

35 Halsey Street, 2nd Floor, Newark, NJ 07102 • (973) 643-3876 • Fax (973) 643-9153 • advocates@acnj.org • www.acnj.org

"County leaders are increasingly using the Kids Count data to inform decisions and formulate responses to the needs of children and families. That's good news for children," she added.

Zalkind noted that counties that have used Kids Count to target issues are seeing results.

"Gloucester County, for example, has made a concerted effort to use Kids Count to address persistent issues that negatively affect children," she noted. "This year, Gloucester moved from 12th to 10th place in the rankings. That's substantial progress that translates to real-life change for thousands of children."

In addition to the county profiles, which measure progress over a 1-year period, ACNJ also released ***New Jersey Kids Count: The State of Our Counties,*** a pocket guide that provides a 5-year comparison of various measures of child well-being, including poverty, health, education and child protection.

ACNJ will be holding regional Kids Count forums in the coming weeks to help county officials, service providers and other child advocates interpret the statistics and translate the information into action that can help improve the lives of thousands of children.

"We encourage county leaders to use Kids Count data to understand the state of children in their county and to target resources to meet children's most pressing needs," Zalkind said. "Using data to drive decisions results in better outcomes for children and families."

The overall child well-being rankings for each county follow. To view individual county profiles and rankings on specific indicators, go to www.acnj.org.

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Kids Count is a national and state-by-state statistical effort to track the state of children in the United States, sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Advocates for Children of New Jersey is a statewide child research and action organization and the New Jersey Kids Count grantee.

New Jersey Kids Count Rankings

OVERALL RANK		
	2011 Rank	**2012 Rank**
Atlantic	19	20
Bergen	3	4
Burlington	8	11
Camden	16	19
Cape May	18	17
Cumberland	21	21
Essex	15	14
Gloucester	12	10
Hudson	14	15
Hunterdon	1	2
Mercer	11	12
Middlesex	5	5
Monmouth	6	6
Morris	2	1
Ocean	13	13
Passaic	17	16
Salem	20	18
Somerset	4	3
Sussex	7	7
Union	10	8
Warren	9	9