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AUTHOR McDonald, Thomas P.; Brook, Jody  
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## ABSTRACT

This Kids Count census brief is the first in a series to offer policymakers concise glimpses of Kansas' children and families. The brief's introduction notes significant changes in the child population during the past decade: approximately one-half of Kansas' child population is concentrated in five counties; the state's child population grew by 8 percent, but the relative proportion of children in the population remained stable; although many counties experienced a decline in the birth-to-age-5 population, many counties also experienced an increase in the oldest age group, 15-17; and the state's child population has seen an increase in the number of multi-racial children and rapid growth of the Hispanic population. The remaining sections of the brief detail each of the preceding findings, including state maps with all counties illustrating the data. The brief concludes with policy implications of the data in the areas of allocation of resources and social service delivery. (HTH)

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# COUNTING KIDS

## The Changing Face of Kansas Children

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# 2000 Census Brief

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# Purpose

"Counting Kids: The Changing Face of Kansas Children," is the first of a series of reports that will be produced during the next two years by Kansas Action for Children in collaboration with the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare.

These reports, offering glimpses of the state's children and families, are intended to provide policy-makers with key data that will enable them to think beyond the present and plan for long-term needs.

The 2000 Census briefs are made possible by grants from the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, Hutchinson, Kan., and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

 KANSAS  
ACTION FOR  
CHILDREN

*Making a difference for Kansas children.*



# Introduction

Analyses of Census 2000 data for the state of Kansas by the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare reveal some significant changes in the child population during the past decade. Among them are the following findings:

- Approximately one-half of Kansas' child population is concentrated in five counties: Sedgwick, Johnson, Wyandotte, Shawnee and Douglas.
- The state's child population grew by 8 percent between 1990 and 2000; however, the relative proportion of children in the population has remained stable.
- Although a significant number of counties experienced a decline in the birth to age 5 population, many counties also experienced an increase in the oldest age group, ages 15-17.
- The state's child population has become increasingly diverse. Particularly noteworthy is the increase in multiracial children, and the rapid growth of the Hispanic population.



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Census Brief  
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## Population Distribution

Approximately one-half of Kansas' 712,993 children and youth live in five counties.

- More than 100,000 children live in each of the state's two largest counties, Sedgwick, 127,535, and Johnson 122,168.
- An additional 15 percent, 108,330, of the total live in the next three largest counties: Wyandotte, Shawnee and Douglas.
- Twenty-seven counties have less than 1,000 children. Most of these counties are in the western part of the state.
- Children constitute more than 30 percent of the population in nine counties, all in southwestern Kansas.

Both counties with small numbers of children and those with large child populations have their own unique infrastructure challenges, including social service and educational planning.



Cheyenne	Rawlins	Decatur	Norton	Phillips	Smith	Jewell	Republic	Washington	Marshall	Nemaha	Brown	Doniphan
Sherman	Thomas	Sheridan	Graham	Rooks	Osborne	Mitchell	Cloud	Clay	Riley	Pottawatomie	Jackson	Atchison
Wallace	Logan	Gove	Trego	Ellis	Russell	Lincoln	Ottawa	Dickinson	Geary	Wabaunsee	Shawnee	Leavenworth
Greeley	Wichita	Scott	Ness	Rush	Barton	Ellsworth	Saline	McPherson	Morris	Osage	Franklin	Miami
Hamilton	Kearny	Finney	Hodgeman	Pawnee	Stafford	Reno	Harvey	Chase	Lyon	Coffey	Anderson	Linn
Stanton	Grant	Haskell	Ford	Kiowa	Pratt	Kingman	Sedgwick	Butler	Greenwood	Woodson	Allen	Bourbon
Morton	Stevens	Seward	Meade	Comanche	Barber	Harper	Sumner	Cowley	Elk	Wilson	Neosho	Crawford
			Clark					Chautauqua	Montgomery	Labette		Cherokee

## Number of Kids in Kansas

### Legend

< 1000    1000 - 10000    10000 - 20000    20000 - 50000    > 100000

## Population Growth

While the number of children in Kansas grew by 8 percent between 1990 and 2000, the relative proportion of children in the population has remained stable.

- Much of the child population growth is occurring in clusters, in and around cities. Johnson County led the state in child population growth between 1990 and 2000, with an increase of 28 percent.
- Two counties that border Johnson County – Douglas and Miami – also experienced increases over 20 percent, significantly greater than the national growth rate of 14 percent.
- The child population in eight rural southwestern counties experienced growth rates of 10 percent or more.
- Children comprise more than 30 percent of the population in nine southwestern counties.
- The total child population declined in 66 Kansas counties. Graham and Ness counties both experienced declines over 25 percent.

Counties with high percentages of children will present proportionately greater demands on the adult population for resources and services. More than one out of four persons (27 percent) is younger than 18 years. The state's child population grew by more than 50,000 during the 1990s. This increase creates an added demand on some local school systems and state resources.

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Cheyenne	Rawlins	Decatur	Norton	Phillips	Smith	Jewell	Republic	Washington	Marshall	Nemaha	Brown	Doniphan
Sherman	Thomas	Sheridan	Graham	Rooks	Osborne	Mitchell	Cloud	Clay	Pottawatomie	Jackson	Atchison	
Wallace	Logan	Gove	Trego	Ellis	Russell	Lincoln	Ottawa	Geary	Wabaunsee	Shawnee	Leavenworth	Wyandotte
Greeley	Wichita	Scott	Ness	Rush	Barton	Ellsworth	Saline	Dickinson	Morris	Osage	Franklin	Miami
Hamilton	Kearny	Finney	Hodgeman	Pawnee	Stafford	Reno	McPherson	Marion	Chase	Lyon	Coffey	Anderson
Stanton	Grant	Haskell	Gray	Edwards	Pratt	Kingman	Sedgwick	Butler	Greenwood	Woodson	Allen	Bourbon
Morton	Stevens	Seward	Meade	Clark	Comanche	Harper	Sumner	Cowley	Elk	Wilson	Neosho	Crawford
					Barber			Chautauqua		Montgomery	Labette	Cherokee

## Percent Change in Number of Kids 1990 - 2000

### Legend

declined >10%      declined <10%      increased <10%      increased >20%





## Age Groups

The increase in the child population is entirely due to increases in the older age groups, ages 10-14 and ages 15-17.

- Overall, the state has experienced a 28 percent increase in the 15- to 17-year-old category in the past decade.
- Thirty-eight counties experienced a 30 percent or higher increase in the oldest age group, with six of these experiencing increases of over 45 percent.
- The number of children younger than age 5 decreased in 79 counties; however, statewide the number of children in this age group has remained about the same.
- The number of children younger than age 5 increased by more than 10 percent in six southwestern counties.

The growing adolescent population has policy implications for schools and agencies that deal with older children and their families. Although the number of children younger than 5 decreased in 79 counties, a substantial majority of Kansas children still are ages 9 and younger.

Cheyenne	Rawlins	Decatur	Norton	Phillips	Smith	Jewell	Republic	Washington	Marshall	Nemaha	Brown	Doniphan
Sherman	Thomas	Sheridan	Graham	Rooks	Osborne	Mitchell	Cloud	Clay	Pottawatomie	Jackson	Atchison	
Wallace	Logan	Gove	Trego	Ellis	Russell	Lincoln	Ottawa	Geary	Wabaunsee	Shawnee	Jefferson	Leavenworth Wyandotte
Greeley	Wichita	Lane	Ness	Rush	Barton	Ellsworth	Saline	Dickinson	Morris	Osage	Franklin	Miami
Hamilton	Kearny	Finney	Hodgeman	Pawnee	Stafford	Rice	McPherson	Marion	Chase	Lyon	Coffey	Anderson
Stanton	Grant	Haskell	Ford	Kiowa	Pratt	Reno	Harvey	Butler	Greenwood	Woodson	Allen	Bourbon
Morton	Stevens	Seward	Clark	Comanche	Barber	Kingman	Sedgwick	Elk	Wilson	Neosho	Crawford	
		Meade	Meade	Barber	Barber	Harper	Sumner	Cowley	Chautauqua	Montgomery	Labette	Cherokee

## Percent Change in Number of Kids Age 15-17 from 1990 to 2000

### Legend

declined      increased <15%      increased 15-30%      increased 30-45%      increased >45%

## Diversity

The state's child population has become increasingly diverse. Racial minorities (non-Whites) accounted for 18.5 percent of the state's child population.

- The more racially diverse counties tend to cluster in the rural south-west and urban northeast regions of the state.
- The racial category "Two or more races" was chosen for 21 percent of Kansas' minority children, compared to 13 percent nationally.
- Children are more likely to be multiracial than adults. Younger children are most likely to be multiracial, suggesting that this category will continue to grow.
- The increase in the Hispanic child population from 1990 to 2000 in Kansas is more than twice the rate of increase for the nation as a whole. The heaviest concentration is in ages birth through 9.
- In 13 Kansas counties, more than 20 percent of the child population is Hispanic.

The growing diversity among Kansas' children places greater demand on education and social service systems. Many of these children come from homes where English is not the primary language, and where cultural and religious traditions impact social service delivery strategies.

Cheyenne	Rawlins	Decatur	Norton	Phillips	Smith	Jewell	Republic	Washington	Marshall	Nemaha	Brown	Doniphan
Sherman	Thomas	Sheridan	Graham	Rooks	Osborne	Mitchell	Cloud	Clay	Pottawatomie	Jackson	Atchison	
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Greeley	Wichita	Scott	Lane	Rush	Barton	Ellsworth	Saline	Dickinson	Morris	Osage	Douglas	Johnson
Hamilton	Kearny	Finney	Hodgeman	Pawnee	Stafford	Reno	McPherson	Marion	Chase	Lyon	Franklin	Miami
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			Clark	Kiowa	Barber	Harper	Elk	Wilson	Neosho	Crawford		
			Clark	Comanche	Barber	Harper	Cowley	Chautauqua	Montgomery	Labette	Cherokee	

## Percent Minority Kids

### Legend

<5%	5-10%	10-20%	20-30%	>30%
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## Policy Implications

Several findings have important implications for policies that address the allocation of resources and social service delivery systems.

### Allocation of Resources

The practice of allocating resources to counties based on population should be re-evaluated in light of demographic realities. Although it makes sense that Douglas, Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee and Wyandotte counties, where about one-half of the state's children reside, require greater resources than most counties, policy-makers should not lose sight of the fact that many small counties face unique challenges.

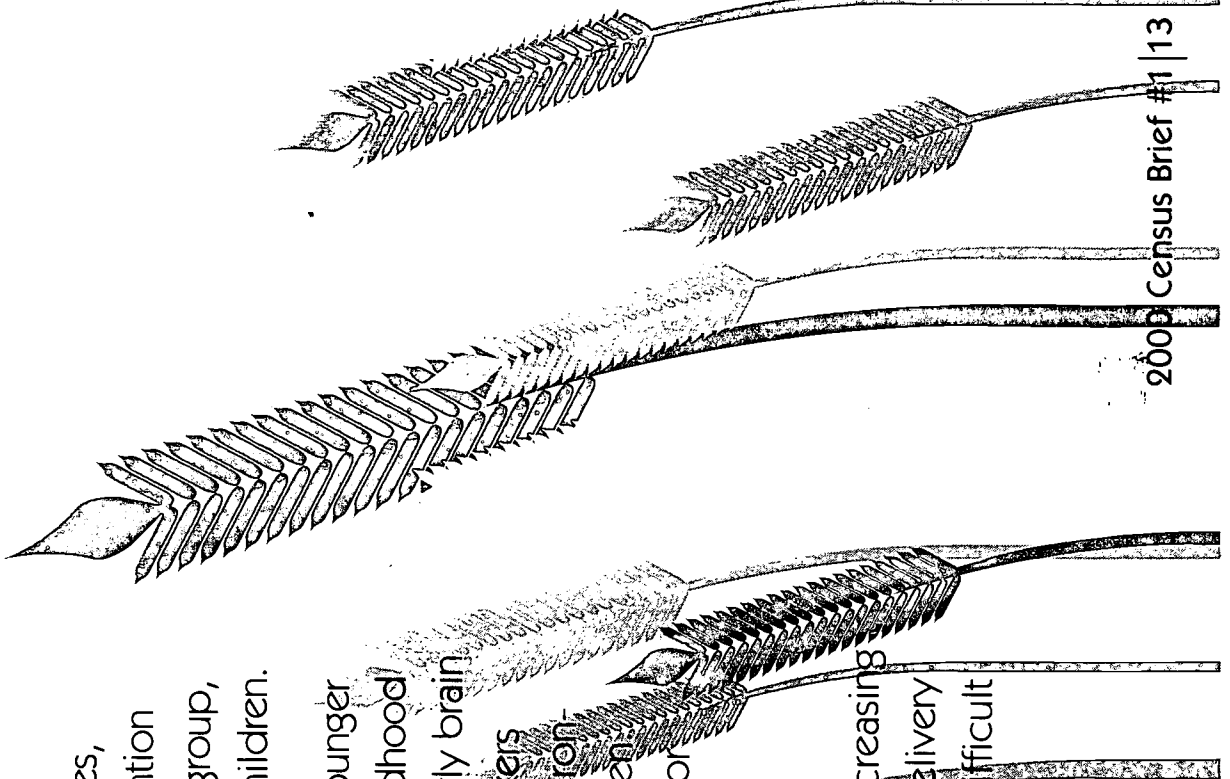
For example, the increasing racial and ethnic diversity in southwestern Kansas and other counties will continue to challenge health, education and social service systems. Because many of these children come from homes where English is not the primary language, schools and state agencies confront language and cultural barriers. Dealing with this growing diversity may require policy changes in some state and county offices as well as more creative and aggressive outreach and service delivery strategies.

Moreover, the adolescent population increased in all but five counties, underscoring the importance of out-of-school programs, and prevention and treatment services for older children. Young persons in this age group, and their families, often experience stresses not faced by younger children.

At the same time, even though the number of children ages 5 and younger decreased in many counties, the demand for more quality early childhood programs is increasing in communities throughout Kansas. Recent early brain development studies have made parents, advocates and policy-makers more aware of how critical it is to provide safe and stimulating environments, as well as quality health and social services, to young children. Thus, even counties with fewer children face increasing demands for resources.

#### Social Service Delivery

The same factors that require greater resources in counties with decreasing child populations put greater strains on health and social service delivery systems. This is especially true in rural counties, where it may be difficult to find enough adults who have the skills to meet children's needs.



In addition, the fact that a county has fewer children does not mean it requires fewer programs and services for children or that delivery of these services will become less expensive: Economies of scale dictate that counties with a smaller child population may find it difficult to efficiently operate early childhood programs, child care centers and community schools without state assistance.

Finally, the state's child population has increased by about 50,000. This increase in the number of children, the increased diversity, the rapid growth in certain areas of the state, the way in which the child population is dispersed across Kansas and the combined effect of these demographic realities on the delivery of state services and programs to children make it clear that anything less than maintaining current levels of investment in programs and services that affect children cannot be justified.

Some of these same factors, particularly the growing diversity of the state's child population as well as the wide variations in the number of children suggest the need for health, education and social service policies that allow for flexible, local responses. One way to do that is to preserve and expand programs that encourage communities to provide services that fit their own needs.



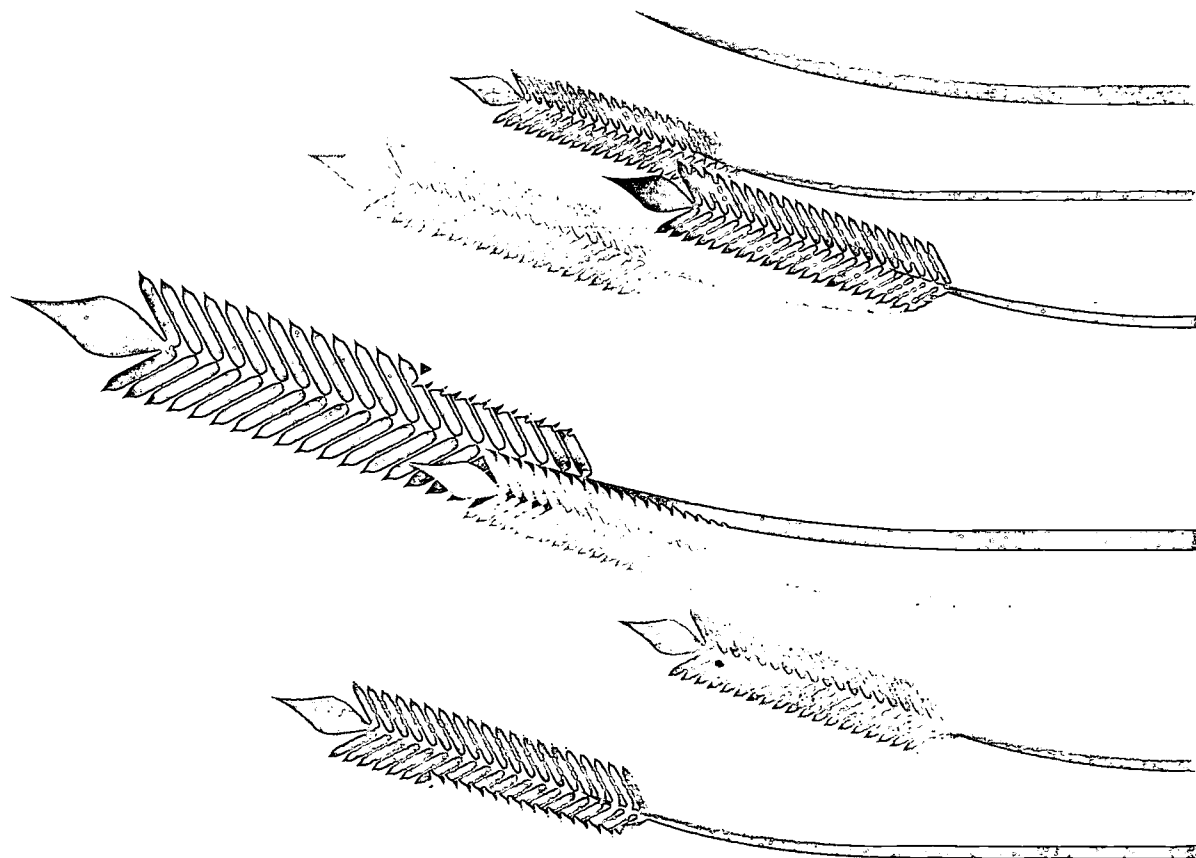
## OUR WORK

**K**ansas Action for Children is an independent, nonpartisan, citizen-based corporation founded in 1979. We do not enter into contracts with, nor receive funding from, government agencies. We work on behalf of all children to ensure that their physical and emotional needs are met, and that they become healthy and contributing adults.

- We paint the picture of Kansas children by gathering and publicizing data on child well-being through the *Kansas Children's Report Card*, the *Kansas KIDS COUNT Data Book* and special reports.
- We advance alternatives by developing state policy that is child, youth and family friendly. Over the years, programs related to early childhood development, teen pregnancy, preventive health care, citizen's review boards, services to children in troubled families and the use of funds from the legal settlement with tobacco companies have stemmed from our work.
- We build the base of citizen advocacy for children and youth by working with citizens and organizations across the state. We believe that hundreds of citizens speaking out for children can help create communities that support families and children.

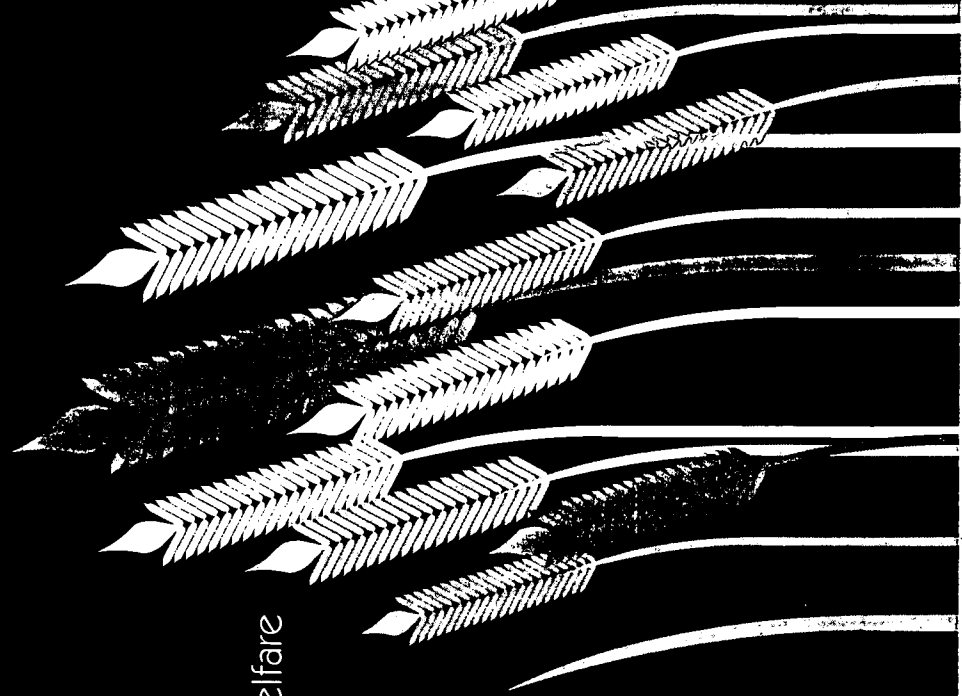
## OUR MISSION

**K**ansas Action for Children advocates for policies and programs that ensure and improve the physical, emotional and educational well-being of all Kansas children and youth. KAC is an independent and nonpartisan voice on their behalf.





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**The 2000 Census Brief series is produced by:**

Thomas P. McDonald, Ph.D., University of Kansas School of Social Welfare  
Jody Brook, LMSW, University of Kansas School of Social Welfare  
Staff, Kansas Action for Children

This report also can be viewed on our Web site: [www.kac.org](http://www.kac.org)



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