

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Conditions of Children in Orange County Report Shows Improving Outcomes for County Youth

Orange County, Calif. (October 22, 2019) – The [25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conditions of Children in Orange County](#) report was released today, offering a comprehensive assessment of the health, economic well-being, education and safety of the County’s children.

A 25-year retrospective shows the changing landscape into which children are born, as well as improvement for the lives and well-being of Orange County’s youth:

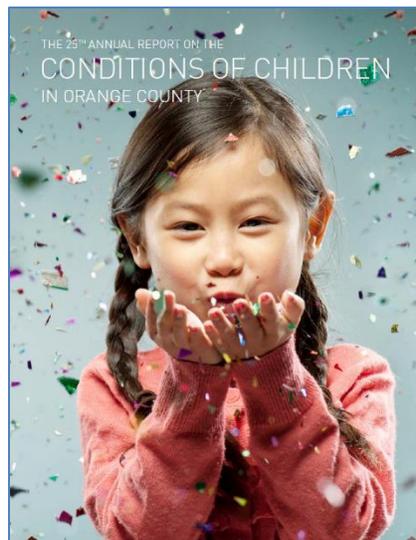
- **Population Size:** Children make up a smaller proportion of our total population; about 10,000 fewer babies are born compared with 25 years ago.
- **Financial/Economic Well-Being:** Orange County unemployment is comparatively low at 2.6 percent; in 1995 it was double that rate at 5.2 percent.
- **Good Health:** The majority of Orange County moms are seeking early prenatal care - higher than 25 years ago, while teen births have dropped dramatically and the rate of infant mortality has been cut in half.
- **Academic Improvement:** A greater percentage of students are completing college preparatory classes.
- **Safe Homes:** The juvenile arrest rate has plummeted over 25 years and substantiated child abuse rates have been cut nearly in half.

“Each year, the Conditions of Children report uncovers areas where County departments can refocus their efforts to enhance the quality of services for our children,” said Supervisor Andrew Do, who serves as the Chair of the Orange County Children’s

Partnership (OCCP), the advisory board responsible for publishing the report. “While the report indicates multiple areas of strength, there is much more we can do to address childhood poverty and the growing challenges associated with children and youth with mental health issues,” said Supervisor Do.

Debra J. Baetz, Director of the County of Orange Social Services Agency and OCCP co-chair stated, “Children clearly thrive when they grow up with opportunities for quality education, availability of jobs, access to health care and safe places to live. Yet we continue to see many of our children and families dealing with housing insecurity and poverty, which may certainly impact their overall health, well-being and general safety.” Baetz continued, “It is imperative that we continue to look for ways to enhance and integrate the programs, services and supports offered to help lift up children and families in Orange County to further promote safe communities and healthy development.”

This year’s report includes a special focus on risk and protective factors contributing to children’s mental health and a new indicator on chronic school absenteeism. To find out more about the other indicators and read the full Report, visit <http://www.ochalthinfo.com/phs/about/family/occp>.



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