

**Safety** – Child is safe from the threat of death, abuse, injury, and harm

**Indicator: Rate of infant mortality**

Infant mortality is used to compare the health and well-being of populations across and within countries. A leading cause of infant mortality is premature births and low birth weight babies.

Sub-indicators of premature births and low birth weight babies:

- Mothers age: Teen mothers (especially those younger than 15 years old) have a much higher risk of having a baby with very low birth weight.
- Multiple births: Multiple birth babies are at increased risk of very low birth weight because they often are premature. About 10 percent of twins and more than one-third of triplets have very low birth weight.
- Mother's health: Women who are exposed to drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes during pregnancy are more likely to have low or very low birth weight babies.
- Mother's socioeconomic status: Women with little education and living in poverty are more likely to have poorer nutrition during pregnancy, inadequate prenatal care, and pregnancy complications - all factors that can contribute to very low birth weight.
- Mother's race: African-American babies are twice as likely to have very low birth weight as Caucasian babies.

Data source for infant mortality: DPH, March of Dimes

**Indicator: Rates of orders of temporary custody**

An Order of Temporary Custody (OTC) is an ex parte order by a judge that is granted to the Department of Children and Families to safeguard the immediate safety of a child without a hearing. An Order of Temporary Custody is ordered when an investigation determines that there is probable cause to believe that the child is at imminent risk of physical harm and that immediate removal from such surroundings is necessary to ensure the child's safety. Serious child abuse and neglect is the leading cause for an OTC:

- Physical or emotional injury or sexual abuse
- Immediate danger due to the parent's failure or refusal to provide for the safety or needs of the child.

Sub-indicators for children at greater risk of physical abuse and neglect:

- Poverty: Children living in poverty are 22 times more likely to be abused than children not living in poverty.

- Domestic violence. Domestic violence significantly raises the risk for physical abuse and emotional injury to a child.
- Alcohol and drug abuse. Parents who are drunk or high are unable to care for their children, make good parenting decisions, and control dangerous impulses. Substance abuse elevates the risk for physical abuse.
- Untreated mental illness. Parents who suffering from depression, an anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, or another mental illness have trouble taking care of themselves and their children. A mentally ill or traumatized parent may be distant and withdrawn from his or her children, or quick to anger without understanding why.
- Lack of parenting skills. Parents with unrealistic expectations about how much care babies and small children need or are capable of doing are at risk of becoming frustrated and abusive. Parents who where themselves victims of child abuse themselves are at increased risk.
- Stress and lack of support. Parents raising children without support from family, friends, or the community or dealing with relationship problems or financial difficulties are at greater risk of abuse or neglect. Caring for a child with a disability, special needs, or difficult behaviors also raises the risk.

Data Source for OTC - DCF

**Indicator: Rates of risk of injury**

Risk of injury to a minor includes two general types of behavior.

- Deliberate indifference to, acquiescence in, or the creation of situations inimical to the minor's moral or physical welfare.
- Acts directly perpetrated on the person of the minor and injurious to his moral or physical well-being.

Sub-indicators:

- Child sexual abuse: Child abuse is - in and of itself - injurious to the well being of a child.
- Human trafficking: Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, and harboring of a child through a use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them.
- Parental neglect: Can put a child more at risk for injury in a number of ways.
- Gangs violence: gangs have been known to recruit children as young 13, placing them at risk of injury. Stray gunfire from gangs has also killed children who were bystanders and traumatized others.

Data source for injury to a minor: Police statistics – FBI report

**Indicator: Children at grade level**

Students falling behind grade level are more likely to be struggling with family, health social and community problems. These children are often dealing with physical, mental, and emotional challenges that interfere with school success.

Sub-indicators:

- Chronic tardiness, absenteeism and truancy: Parents are responsible for getting young children to school. Children who are chronically late or absent are likely to have when parents who are inattentive to their needs and are either unable or unwilling to fulfill their parenting responsibility.
- Poverty: Children living in poverty are less likely to be on grade level than their more affluent peers.
- Parents engaged in drug and alcohol abuse: Chaotic households lead to parental neglect, lack of attention and involvement.
- Gang violence and neighborhood crime: children who are traumatized, frightened, or involved in gangs are less likely to be focused and successful in school.
- Transitory populations: Frequently changing schools or school districts makes staying on grade level challenging.
- Health problems: Health problems can interfere with attendance and the ability of student to perform at school.

**Indicator: Rate of traumatic brain injury**

Traumatic brain injury can occur from an abusive head injury, gun violence, accidents, and medical conditions. The rate of TBI can indicate the level of child safety in and outside of their home.

Sub- indicators:

- Infant mortality: can be caused by shaken baby syndrome, abusive or accidental head injuries
- Risk of injury to a minor: risk of head injury due to violence, recklessness or negligent behavior
- Grade level at school: children with TBI are likely to having learning disabilities.

Data source: DSS, DPH