Colorado’s Youngest: A Profile of the 0-5 Population

Young children grow and develop within the context of their families. But not all families are equipped to provide the support and positive environment that children need to develop to their fullest potentials.

Because of this, Gary Community Investments, which includes The Piton Foundation, is committed to helping ensure that low-income children are prepared to enter kindergarten "ready to learn," meaning they have been exposed to experiences that develop their sensory, language and cognitive skills. Children who enter kindergarten ready to learn are more likely to read proficiently by third grade, a leading indicator of future educational and economic success.

The following is a demographic profile of children, born from 2009 - 2013, living in Colorado and metro Denver. It is the first in a series of data briefs that the Data Initiative is releasing to provide insight into Colorado’s early childhood landscape. To learn more about the 0-5 population, visit the Data Initiative’s story map at: http://arcg.is/2fScPfM

Vulnerable Births

Some children are impacted by risk factors at birth that make them more vulnerable to experiencing adverse health and education outcomes later in life. Two uniquely identifiable risk factors that can be used to define a “vulnerable birth” include being born to a teenage mother or being born to a mother 20 or older with less than a high school education. Children in Colorado born with either of these two risk factors are tracked below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Births</th>
<th>Vulnerable Births</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-08</td>
<td>348,966</td>
<td>87,964</td>
<td>-18,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-13</td>
<td>330,196</td>
<td>65,439</td>
<td>-22,525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vulnerable Share: 25.2% to 19.8%, a decrease of 5.4%.

The Economic Case

Colorado ranks in the top five states nationwide for the greatest number of degree holders per capita. Yet only one-in-five Colorado ninth-graders will earn a college degree. Colorado relies on imported workforce talent, causing its own children to get crowded out of economic opportunities in their own communities as adults.

Family Economic Security

Currently 23% of children in Colorado live in households without at least one parent with steady employment. This means that over 90,000 families are in need of securing stable jobs.
The following data provides deeper insight into where vulnerable children are being born across the metro Denver region. In future data briefs, the Data Initiative will analyze the relationship between where vulnerable children are living and what supportive resources are available in their communities.

Data Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Certificates of Live Birth (2009-2013), unless noted otherwise.

**Most Vulnerable Births**

In metro Denver, some children are impacted by risk factors at birth that make them more vulnerable to experiencing adverse health and education outcomes later in life.

Two uniquely identifiable risk factors that can be used to define a “vulnerable birth” include being born to a teenage mother or being born to a mother over the age of 20 with less than a high school education. Children in metro Denver born with either of these two risk factors are tracked in the chart to the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004-2008</th>
<th>2009-2013</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Births</td>
<td>202,233</td>
<td>187,805</td>
<td>-14,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Births</td>
<td>52,012</td>
<td>37,309</td>
<td>-14,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Share</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where Are Children Being Born?**

The following map shows where births are concentrated in metro Denver.

**Where Are Vulnerable Children Being Born?**

The following map shows where vulnerable births are concentrated in metro Denver.

**Additional Vulnerable Birth Indicators**

Low birth weight, Medicaid as form of payment and birth to single mothers are additional indicators for vulnerable births. The following statistics represent these risk factors in metro Denver for children born from 2009-2013.

- **Low Birth Weight**: 9%
- **Medicaid as Form of Payment (2011-2013)**: 34%
- **Single Mothers**: 23%

**Race/Ethnicity Profile of Births**

The five race categories include the Hispanic ethnicity for children born from 2009-2013.