

NEWS



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MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

City Takes Comprehensive Look at Philadelphia's Children through *Report Card 2006*

City also issues final five Community Report Cards

Philadelphia, PA – During a morning press conference in City Hall, Mayor John F. Street and Philadelphia Safe and Sound unveiled *Report Card 2006: The Well-Being of Children and Youth in Philadelphia* to a large group of City officials, community leaders, parents and children. In its seventh year, the *Report Card* is the most comprehensive study of children's health and safety indicators ever undertaken in the City.

"For our City to succeed our children must prosper," Mayor Street said. "Since my Administration began we have maintained an unwavering commitment to invest in the health, safety and education of our children. The last few years have created hope and progress for many of our young people, but there is still much more work to do."

Produced in partnership with Philadelphia Safe and Sound, a leading child advocacy organization, the report tracks five desired results for children over time: (1) Healthy Start; (2) Stable Early Lives; (3) Healthy Behavior; (4) Safe and Supportive Communities; and (5) Productive Young Adults.

"The *Report Card* serves as an impetus to identify and evaluate the issues that impact the health and well-being of children so that public and private resources can be directed to best address the needs of children and families," said Anne Shenberger, president and CEO of Philadelphia Safe and Sound.

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2006 Report Card on Children Issued/Add Two

This year's *Report Card* shows fewer infants are dying than seven years ago, fewer children are victimized by abuse, and fewer must be taken out of their homes to protect them from abuse. Less teenage girls are jeopardizing their dreams with unintended pregnancies and test scores are up for many children.

Despite these positives, many children continue to face challenges. Too many youth are being killed or injured by violence, the victims of a dangerous mix of guns, anger and despair. Too many youth – one in four – are entering high school only to drop out by the time their former classmates are donning their caps and gowns four years later. Too many youth – more than one in four – live in families struggling to come up with the financial resources to shelter, feed, and care for them.

Mayor Street initiated The Children's Investment Strategy (CIS) to create a safety net of services for children and families that would enhance their quality of life and prevent unnecessary involvement in child welfare, juvenile justice, prison and homeless systems. In FY05 \$88 million of new and redirected CIS funds was targeted for prevention programs. Nearly \$35 million was used for new after-school and youth programs, over \$15 million was used for truancy and delinquency prevention programs and more than \$17 million was used for other children and family support services. In 2005-06, the number of youth development opportunities in the non-school hours created through the City of Philadelphia and related agencies reached 42,401. This represents more than a fivefold increase since 2000.

“As a community we must not shrink from the responsibility to help the children of Philadelphia rise above their difficulties and succeed in life,” Mayor Street said. “We must not lose sight of the progress we have made and the obstacles which remain. Our commitment to our future will ultimately be judged by our treatment of our children.”

In addition to unveiling *Report Card 2006*, Philadelphia Safe and Sound unveiled the final five *Community Report Cards* covering the Lower Northeast, Roxborough/Manayunk, South Philadelphia, the Upper Northeast and West Philadelphia.

The *Community Report Cards* take the findings in the citywide *Report Card* down to the ZIP code level to help manage collective efforts to improve children's lives, identify challenges, set priorities, target resources and monitor progress in City neighborhoods.

When joined with the first six *Community Report Cards* issued in April (Bridesburg/Kensington/Richmond, Germantown/Chestnut Hill, Lower North, Olney/Oak Lane, Southwest, Upper North), these reports on 11 City neighborhoods provide an in-depth look into the shifting dynamics of progress and challenges in Philadelphia neighborhoods. The *Community Report Cards* are published in partnership with the Mayor's Children's Commission and Philadelphia Safe and Sound and are available at www.philasafesound.org.

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