

NJSHAD Provides Critical Data for Identifying and Addressing NJ's Child Health Issues

Wanted: Accurate, detailed, and up-to-date data about NJ's children

Peter Chen, staff attorney with [Advocates for Children of New Jersey](#) (ACNJ), needs all the detailed health data for New Jersey's children that he can get. "ACNJ is an advocacy organization, and we consistently need accurate, up-to-date, detailed information, so we can track the health of New Jersey's kids. We especially need to understand which groups of kids are experiencing poor outcomes so that we can work with partners throughout New Jersey to fix the situation."

Alana Vega is the Kids Count Coordinator at ACNJ. [Kids Count](#) is a project of the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) and a source of data on children and families. Each year, the Foundation produces a comprehensive report — the Kids Count Data Book — that assesses child well-being in the United States. Ms. Vega's job is to create and publish annual [New Jersey Kids Count](#) and [Newark Kids Count](#) Data Books, as well as County Pocket Guides, which bring together detailed statistics about New Jersey children and youth overall, by county, and for New Jersey's largest city, Newark. The task involves gathering and packaging the latest statistics and five-year trend data for multiple content areas: demographics, economic well-being, education, family and community, health, and safety and risky behaviors. According to Ms. Vega, "Data acquisition is a huge task, and comparable data needs to be available for Newark, each of New Jersey's 21 counties, and for the state as a whole. Additionally, it's important that health data be available by age group, race, ethnicity, and nativity. Since updated ACNJ Kids Count Data Books are published annually, the newest child health data needs to be reliably available each year."



"The wealth of health data that's available in our new 2018 Newark Kids Count Data Book is only possible because of NJSHAD." – Alana Vega, ACNJ

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The New Jersey State Health Assessment Data (NJSHAD) system serves as the main data portal for the New Jersey Department of Health and provides public access to data and statistics from throughout NJDOH. NJSHAD provides public health indicator reports which combine statistics and information, community health profiles which allow comparisons to state and national data, and interactive public health data query tools. The functionality, content, and utility of NJSHAD are constantly being enhanced.

nj.gov/health/shad

That's where NJSHAD comes in.

Advocates for Children of New Jersey depends on the New Jersey Department of Health's State Health Assessment Data (NJSHAD) System, to provide easy access to health datasets needed for their advocacy activities and Kids Count Data Books. As stated by Ms. Vega, "The wealth of health data that's available in our new 2018 Newark Kids Count Data Book is only possible because of NJSHAD. Our data books and targeted analyses are used by policy makers who need accurate and up-to-date data on the health status of New Jersey's kids. Because of the way you can drill down by race and ethnicity, you can get very specific using NJSHAD."



"Without NJSHAD, we could not do our work as effectively or efficiently." – Peter Chen, ACNJ

On July 31, 2018, ACNJ issued a new publication called [New Jersey Babies Count 2018: A Statewide Profile of Infants and Toddlers](#). The report includes indicators of family



support, early learning, and health for New Jersey children from birth to age 3. "The health section will be the largest because with NJSHAD you can drill down to the detailed data you want. We'll be including data on infant mortality, low birthweight, prenatal care access, and survey data from the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). These data points give readers a snapshot of how New Jersey's infants and toddlers are faring," said Ms. Vega.

As stated by ACNJ's staff attorney Peter Chen, "NJSHAD and our Kids Count Data Books share the common goal of providing New Jersey communities with agreed-upon and trusted sets of data that policymakers can work from. I'm very grateful that the New Jersey Department of Health understands and shares online datasets that support our needs. Without NJSHAD, we could not do our work as effectively or efficiently."