

# Birth to 22 – Palm Beach County

Key Indicators of Child and Youth Well-Being in our Community

November 2025

## Trends in Child and Youth Well-Being Indicators



The Birth to 22 collaborative came together in 2014 to create a collective of organizations and individuals committed to the betterment of children and youth in Palm Beach County.

Community level data has served as a beacon for informing and guiding community stakeholders on areas of focus. These efforts have been triangulated through involving parents, youth, and professionals to gain perspective, insight, and work together towards implementing solutions. In the years where the Birth to 22 data has been compiled and examined, Palm Beach County has **demonstrated improvements** in:

- **Child Poverty** – child poverty rates decreased from **22.2%** in 2015 to **15.4%** in 2023. <sup>1</sup>
- **Child Maltreatment** – children who were victims of verified abuse and neglect has steadily declined each year and demonstrated a **34% decrease** from 1,214 in 2019-2020 to 805 in 2023-2024. <sup>2</sup>
- **Out-of-Home Placements** – children in out-of-home placements has steadily declined each year and demonstrated a **31% decrease** from 1,044 in 2019-2020 to 719 in 2023-2024. <sup>2</sup>
- **Developmental Screening** – children 0-5yrs receiving an ASQ-3 screening – to learn whether developmental milestones are met – **increased 44%** from 9,856 children screened in 2014-2015 to 14,156 in 2023-2024. <sup>3</sup>
- **Children Receiving Early Steps** – children 0-3yrs receiving Early Steps **increased by 17%** from 3,284 in 2016-2017 to 3,851 in 2023-2024. <sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019-2023).

<sup>2</sup> Office of Child and Family Well-Being Dashboard: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/ocfw-dashboard>

<sup>3</sup> Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, Healthy Beginnings Data System

<sup>4</sup> Treasure Coast Early Steps, Palm Beach County

- **Children Evaluated by Child Find** – children 3-5yrs evaluated by Child Find **increased by 33%** from 1,786 child evaluations in 2014-2015 to 2,371 in 2024-2025. <sup>5</sup>
- **Higher Participation in VPK** – children in Palm Beach County have consistently had higher participation in the state funded voluntary pre-kindergarten (VPK) program as compared to the state overall. In 2023-2024, **73.2%** of Palm Beach County 4-year-olds participated in VPK versus **66.7%** in the state of Florida overall. <sup>6</sup>
- **Grade Level Reading** – Students reading on grade level has increased nearly 8 points in grade 3 (48.9 to 56.5), 14 points in grade 6 (47.9 to 61.7), and 12 points in grade 10 (47.4 to 59.2) since the advent of the BEST standards in 2023. <sup>7</sup>
- **Caring Adult** – Over the past 3 years students indicating there is an adult at school they can talk to about their problems increased approximately 5 percentage points.<sup>7</sup>
- **Out-of-School Time** – school age children who received scholarships to attend afterschool or summer camp **increased by 17%** from 14,459 in 2017-2018 to 16,930 in 2023-2024.<sup>8</sup>
- **Participation in School Clubs** – middle and high schoolers who report participation in school clubs increased from **29%** in 2016 to **36%** in 2024. <sup>9</sup>
- **Youth who Smoke Cigarettes** – middle and high schoolers who report smoking cigarettes decreased substantially from **5%** in 2014 to **less than 1%** in 2024. <sup>10</sup>
- **Youth who Drink Alcohol** – middle and high schoolers who report drinking alcohol decreased substantially from **25%** in 2014 to **12%** in 2024. <sup>9</sup>
- **High School Graduation** – high school graduation rates have shown substantial and steady growth, increasing from **77.9%** in 2013-2014 to **92.1%** in 2023-2024. Palm Beach County consistently has higher graduation rates compared to the

---

<sup>5</sup> School District of Palm Beach County, Department of Exceptional Student Education

<sup>6</sup> Florida Office of Economic & Demographic Research. Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference

<sup>7</sup> School District of Palm Beach County, Department of Research Evaluation & Assessment

<sup>8</sup> Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County and Palm Beach County Youth Services

<sup>9</sup> Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS)

<sup>10</sup> Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS)

state overall. In 2023-2024, **92.1%** of Palm Beach County youth graduated from high school versus **89.7%** in the state of Florida overall.<sup>11</sup>

- **Youth Arrested** – the number of youths arrested **decreased 60%** from 3,869 in 2014-2015 to 1,542 in 2023-2024 in Palm Beach County.<sup>12</sup>

Child and youth well-being indicators that have **worsened** or **shown declines**:

- **Prenatal Care** – births receiving first trimester prenatal care decreased from **76%** in 2014 to **69%** in 2024 among Palm Beach County resident births. The receipt of first trimester prenatal care also declined in a similar fashion statewide from 79% in 2014 to 69% in 2024 among all Florida births.<sup>13</sup>
- **Low Birthweight** – infants born weighing less than 2500 grams in Palm Beach County increased from **8.5%** in 2014 to **9.2%** in 2024.<sup>13</sup>
- **Preterm Births** – infants born after less than 37 weeks of pregnancy increased from **9.3%** in 2014 to **11.1%** in 2024.<sup>13</sup>
- **Infant Mortality** – rates of infants dying before reaching one year of age in Palm Beach County increased from **4.8** in 2014 to **6.2** in 2024.<sup>13</sup>
- **Chronic Absenteeism** – There has been a substantial increase in chronic absenteeism post pandemic with the percentage of students absent 11+ days increasing from **23.6%** in 2018-2019 to **37.7%** in 2024-2025.<sup>7</sup>
- **Child Deaths** – the Palm Beach County medical examiner's office investigates all violent, sudden, unexpected, and suspicious deaths. Child deaths that were investigated rose in 2024 to **46** whereas the average number of deaths investigated between 2017 and 2023 was **33**.<sup>14</sup>
- **Physically Bullied** – the percentage of middle and high school students who report being physically bullied (i.e., hit, kicked, shoved, or had money or belongings taken) increased from **26.4%** in 2018 to **34.6%** in 2024.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> School District of Palm Beach County, Florida Department of Education: [www.fldoe.org/accountability/](http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/)

<sup>12</sup> Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Office of Research and Data Integrity, Delinquency Profile

<sup>13</sup> Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics: [www.flhealthcharts.gov/](http://www.flhealthcharts.gov/)

<sup>14</sup> Palm Beach County Medical Examiner: [discover.pbcgov.org/medicalexaminer/Pages/Reports-Forms.aspx](http://discover.pbcgov.org/medicalexaminer/Pages/Reports-Forms.aspx)

<sup>15</sup> Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS), 2018-2024