



## Children & Youth

### Objective:

Support the optimal growth and development of children and youth

### What is happening in King County?

The infant mortality rate is the risk of death in the first year of life. King County's overall infant mortality rate of 4.1 deaths per 1000 live births is lower than the Healthy People 2020 objective (a national set of science-based health benchmarks created by the US Department of Health and Human Services), but conceals substantial disparities by race/ethnicity and income. American Indian/Alaskan Native babies die at more than three times the rate of White babies, and Black/African American, multiracial and infants living in low-income neighborhoods also are more likely to die in their first year of life. Early prenatal care and early interventions, with moms and babies at risk, can help to reverse these outcomes.

In King County, on average, children and youth perform better in school and have higher graduation rates than the average statewide. However, these findings mask large differences within King County. Children in most ethnic minority groups have higher high school drop-out rates than white and Asian students and perform lower on standardized tests during elementary school.

In order for children and youth to achieve optimal development, they must be supported prenatally, during their early childhood and through their school years. While some children in King County have these supports, others are experiencing higher risks. The higher infant mortality rates, and lower school performance and higher drop-out rates among some groups suggest a need for even more targeted strategies to reverse these disparities.

School and life success -- influenced by the optimal growth and development of children and youth -- can be impacted by the types of risks that children, youth and their families experience, as well as the ways in which they are 'protected' from these risks. Lowering risk and increasing protection helps to ensure more positive outcomes, for children, youth and their families, and for our overall community, including better high school graduation rates leading to higher-paying jobs, and lower involvement with the criminal justice system. Prevention and early intervention programs and services for children, youth and families, in partnerships between King County, local schools, and community-based organizations, can help to reduce risks, and increase protections.

### What role does King County play?

The county's primary role is to provide early perinatal and post-birth support to families most at risk in order to help to ensure that our students are healthy once they reach school, and provide educational support programs to children, youth and families more likely to experience health and educational disparities. King County does this through direct services to families and through working in partnership with community-based organizations and schools. For instance, King County provides direct

services to pregnant women and their babies up through age 2 months, to address the risks and opportunities for optimal growth and development, and through delivering substance abuse prevention and early intervention programs for middle or junior high school students at schools in King County. See the Educational Partnership Strategy for more about the many partnerships in which King County participates to enhance local and regional education systems

### **What else influences these indicators?**

Children are born learning. But children can only be successful in school when they are able to adjust to the demands of a classroom, are comfortable exploring and asking questions, able to listen to the teacher, and play and work well with other children. Evidence shows that kids who are physically healthy, emotionally mature, socially competent, and have cognitive, language, and communication skills are more likely to benefit from learning opportunities offered in the school environment than children who are not prepared in these ways. Parents, caregivers, early learning educators in child care centers and family home child care, and preschools, and communities are all responsible for providing children with opportunities to acquire these developmental milestones in preparation for school and appropriate educational opportunities and supports for at-risk students once they are in school.

### **What can you do?**

[Learn more about the relationship between health and educational success](#)

[Learn more about the importance of early prenatal care and risks of smoking during pregnancy](#)

[Learn how parents can help their children be ready to succeed in school](#)

[Find parenting resources](#)

### **Related Links**

[Communities Count](#)

[King County Community Health Indicators: High school education](#)

### **Technical Notes**

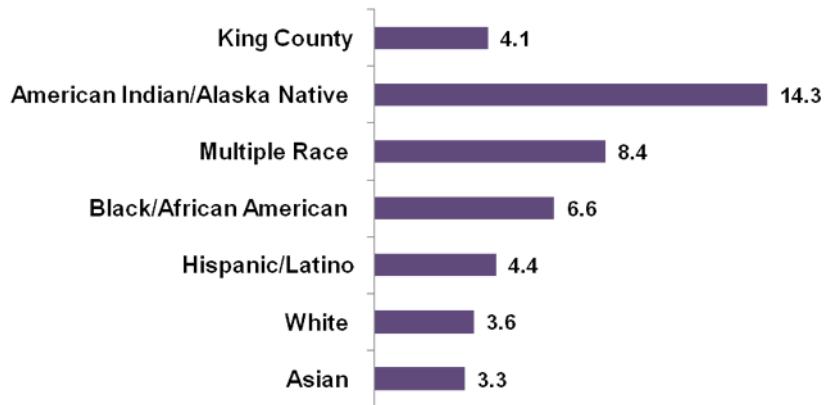
Infant mortality rates data from Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificates. Prepared by Public Health -- Seattle & King County, Assessment, Policy Development and Evaluation Unit.

Student proficiency reading and math and High school graduation rates from Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Graduation rates are based on cohorts of students entering high school in the same year. The chart showing students graduating within 5 years uses OSPI Extended Graduation Rate for Class of 2009 as of the 2009-10 school year.

Graduation rate is extended graduation rate (for class of 2010 as of 2010-11 school year).

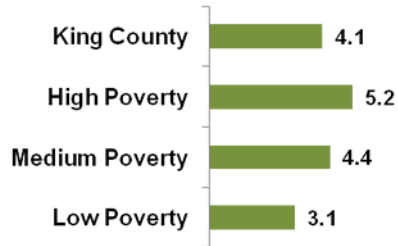
## Charts and Maps

**Infant Mortality Rate**  
(per 1,000 births, by race/ethnicity, 2006-2010 average)



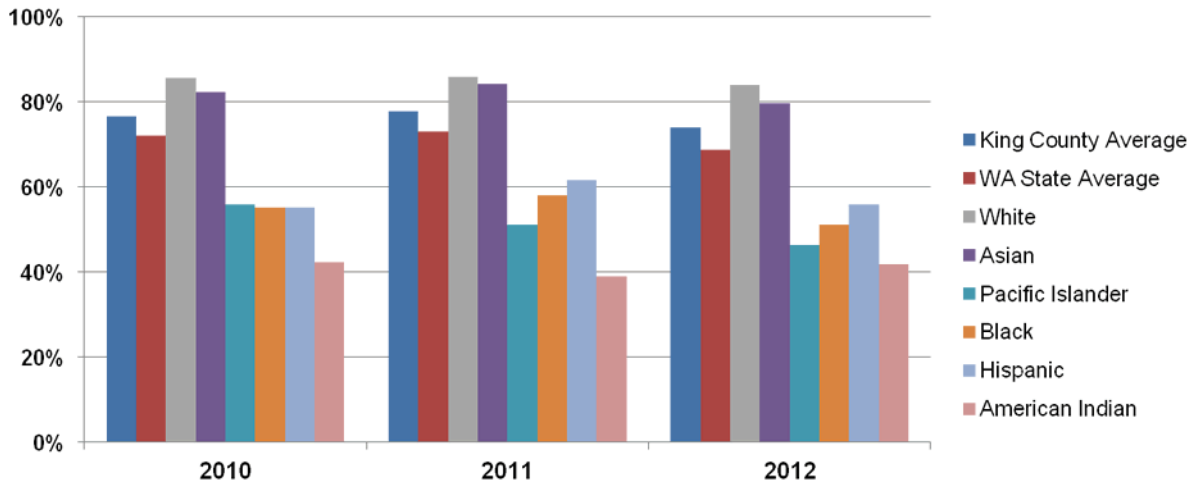
Data Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, prepared by Public Health-Seattle & King County Assessment, Policy Development & Evaluation Unit

**Infant Mortality Rate**  
(per 1,000 births, by neighborhood poverty level, 2006-2010 average)



Data Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, prepared by Public Health-Seattle & King County Assessment, Policy Development & Evaluation Unit

### Percent of 3rd Grade Students Proficient in Reading (by race/ethnicity)

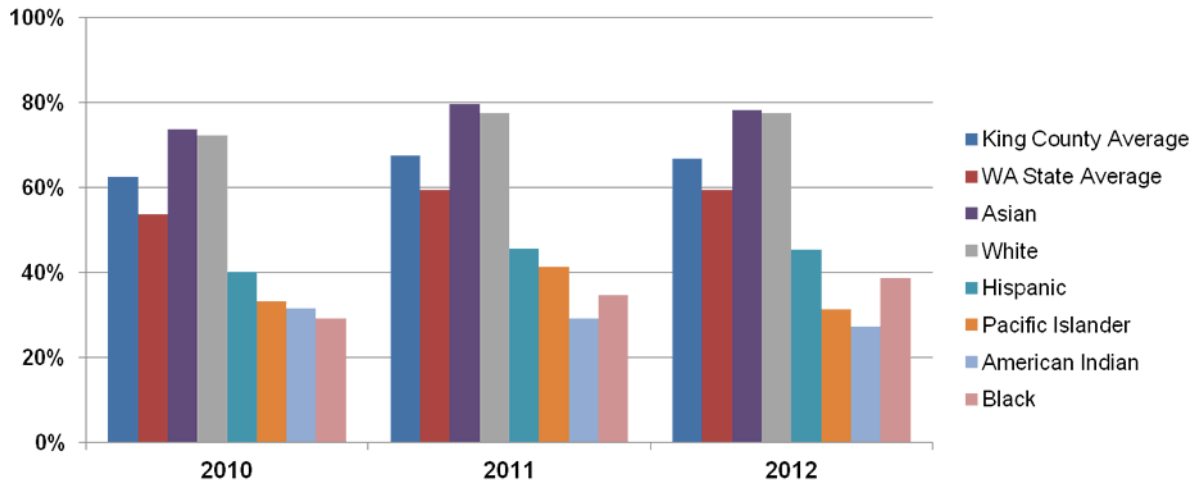


### Percent of 3rd Grade Students Proficient in Reading (by race/ethnicity)

	2010	2011	2012
<b>King County Average</b>	77%	78%	74%
<b>WA State Average</b>	72%	73%	69%
<b>White</b>	86%	86%	84%
<b>Asian</b>	82%	84%	80%
<b>Pacific Islander</b>	56%	51%	46%
<b>Black</b>	55%	58%	51%
<b>Hispanic</b>	55%	62%	56%
<b>American Indian</b>	42%	39%	42%

Data Source: Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

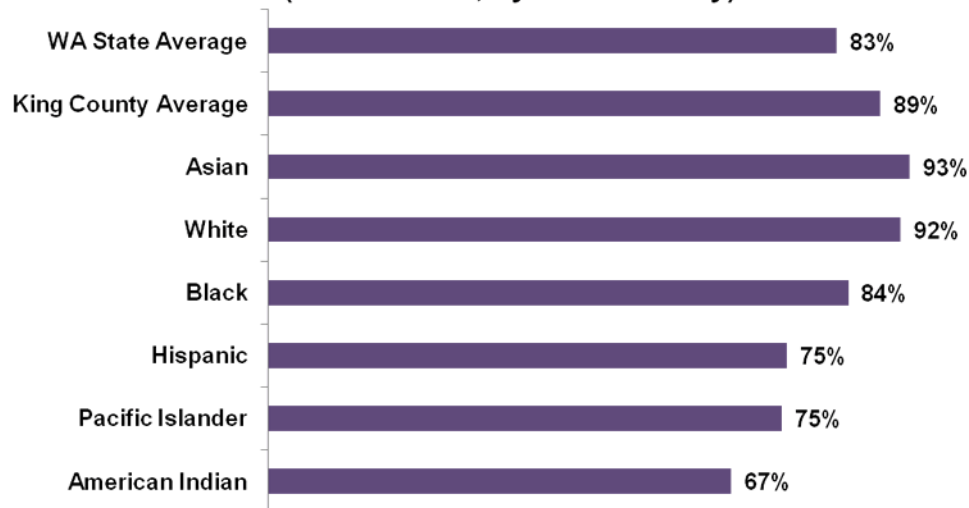
### Percent of 4th Grade Students Proficient in Math (by race/ethnicity)



Percent of 4th Grade Students Proficient in Math (by race/ethnicity)			
	2010	2011	2012
King County Average	62%	67%	67%
WA State Average	54%	59%	59%
Asian	74%	79%	78%
White	72%	77%	77%
Hispanic	40%	45%	45%
Pacific Islander	33%	41%	31%
American Indian	31%	29%	27%
Black	29%	34%	39%

Data Source: Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

### Percent of Students Graduating High School within 5 years (class of 2009, by race/ethnicity)



Data Source: Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

# Rate of Infant Mortality

