



The Independent Voice for Kentucky's Children

KENTUCKY
YOUTH
ADVOCATES

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Focus of First Week of August is National Breastfeeding Awareness

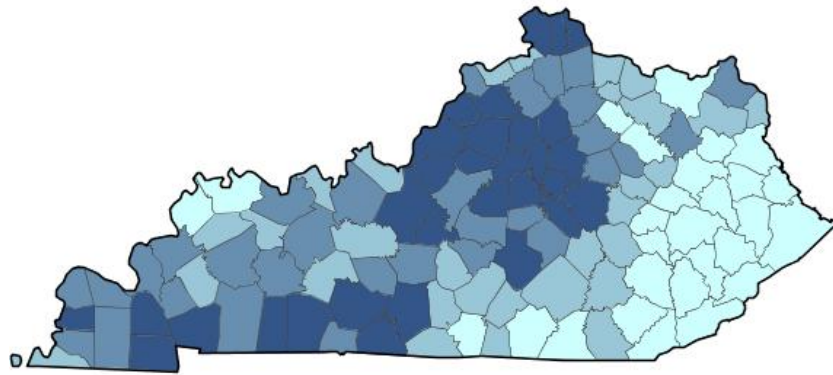
Kentucky needs improvement, ranks second to last in babies who were ever breastfed

Louisville, KY – Despite the fact that breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for infants and is associated with numerous positive outcomes for both babies and mothers, Kentucky has the second lowest rate in the nation of babies who were ever breastfed and the third lowest rate of babies breastfeeding at six months of age, as of 2006.

“Breastfeeding has so many benefits for kids such as fewer ear and respiratory infections, lower risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and obesity, and higher scores on cognitive development tests, yet only 52% of Kentucky newborns are being breastfed upon leaving the hospital,” said Lacey McNary, deputy director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. “We need to do a better job of encouraging new mothers and supporting them in breastfeeding.”

Health care settings often have policies that create barriers to breastfeeding, such as the promotion of bottle feeding and infant formula by distributing free or discounted formula. Many health care settings also lack the personnel needed to teach and encourage breastfeeding. Additional challenges arise when mothers leave the hospital and enter a world that advertises bottle feeding as the norm, and they return to work and other public places that lack the facilities that support breastfeeding and/or pumping.

According to the Kentucky KIDS COUNT 2008 County Data Book, there is wide disparity in breastfeeding initiation rates among counties in Kentucky. The rate of children who are breastfed at hospital discharge range from 74 percent in Oldham County to only 19 percent in Knott County. Kentucky has made some progress in the past years, improving from 48 percent in 2004 to 52 percent in 2006.



54% - 74%
 45% - 54%
 34% - 45%
 19% - 34%

Newborns being breastfed at hospital discharge (Percent) – 2006

Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc.
 KIDS COUNT Data Center, www.kidscount.org/datacenter
 A Project of the Anne E. Casey Foundation

“We know what works when it comes to increasing breastfeeding initiation, and we need to make it a priority in Kentucky,” said McNary. “All mothers should be given adequate education before and after delivery, and the proper support in their communities and workplaces, so that more children in Kentucky have the opportunity to begin life with the best nutrition.”

For more information about breastfeeding in Kentucky see the 2008 County Data Book at: http://kyyouth.org/KIDS_COUNT/documents/08pub_CountyDatabook_breastfeeding.pdf.

For the most recent county-level data for Kentucky visit the KIDS COUNT Data Center at: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/Map.aspx?state=KY&loct=5&ind=3792&dtm=9175&tf=17>.

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Kentucky Youth Advocates is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.