

OUR CHILDREN
OUR OPPORTUNITY
OUR FUTURE

Report to the Community 2006-2007

Council For Youth Development



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Report prepared with support from
Healthy Communities.

INTRODUCTION

“The future we hold in trust for our own children will be shaped by our fairness to other people’s children.”

– Marian Wright Edelman

The Council for Youth Development is the third generation of community work in Bartholomew County focusing on children and youth. The Council has as its ultimate goal every child in the county being Ready by 21™ – ready for learning, ready for work, ready for life. Ready by 21 is the approach developed by the Forum for Youth Investment, a leading national organization in the field of youth development. The overarching goal is that every young person receives the support, resources, and opportunities at home and in the community necessary to be ready for learning, work, and life. The Council for Youth Development is pleased to be a part of this national initiative to improve the odds for every child and youth in Bartholomew County.

The healthy development of children and youth begins prenatally and continues through childhood and adolescence into adulthood. With the passage through these stages come the acquisition of personal and social assets that are needed for a successful transition. Children do not make this transition alone. They must have families and communities that provide the supports for their positive development.

With the goal of ensuring that children have the assets and competencies necessary to be Ready by 21™ – ready for learning, ready for work, ready for life – the Council:

- Activates sectors of the community
- Energizes, expands, and enhances programs
- Mobilizes young people to use their power as change agents
- Engages adults in building sustained relationships with children and youth
- Influences civic decisions

- Monitors and shares current information concerning issues around children and youth.

As a component of the monitoring process, members of the Council are pleased to present *Our Children, Our Opportunity, Our Future*, its first annual report to the community. This initial report is intended to open community dialog which will result in increased focus on positive youth development in Bartholomew County.

CORE BELIEFS

The Council for Youth Development operates with core beliefs, which provide the basis for its work.

All children and youth can succeed and be Ready by 21.

All youth can acquire the competencies, values, and social skills needed for a successful transition into adulthood. These assets develop throughout childhood and adolescence. The Council has established benchmarks along the continuum of development against which progress can be monitored.

Success requires early and sustained investments.

Because development is a continuous process, children require on-going nurturing and support to acquire the assets necessary to be Ready by 21. Continued exposure to positive experiences, settings, and people, as well as opportunities to gain and refine life skills, supports young people in the acquisition and growth of these assets. All young people need a variety of experiences to develop to their full potential. Families and the community must invest in their children and youth throughout the span from birth to age twenty-one to provide these experiences and opportunities. Early and sustained investments will yield fruitful results.

Some children and families need extra support.

Every child is unique, and some have special or unmet needs. These include children and youth such as those with disabilities of all kinds,

living in poverty, in troubled family situations, dealing with language or cultural barriers, experiencing racial or ethnic discrimination, or having experienced traumatic events. These youth, as well as their families, face additional challenges and require extra assistance in addressing these special circumstances.

Everyone in the community has a role.

Children do not travel alone through the developmental stages to adulthood. They travel with their families, friends, neighbors, and a host of other individuals in education, faith organizations, governmental agencies, and community organizations who have their well-being in mind. All systems and settings – formal and informal, public and private - that touch young people’s lives must be involved in assisting children and youth on this journey. There is a role for every community member. A community that is rich in development opportunities for youth and offers a diverse array of program activities attracts the interest of and meets the needs of youth. A community’s investment in its youth impacts not only the future of the young, but that of the community itself.

Child development is multi-dimensional.

The Council has identified five broad developmental domains that constitute a successful transition from childhood into adulthood. When children and youth have developed assets in each of these domains, they should be Ready by 21 and well-prepared for life. These five developmental domains with five age groups (0-5 years; 6-10 years; 11-14 years; 15-18 years, and 19-21 years) within each provide the framework for the Council. The desired key outcomes for youth ages 0-21 years follow.

All Bartholomew County children and youth are –

- *Learning*
Children and youth are learning and succeeding in their educational settings.
- *Working*
Children and youth are preparing for the workforce.
- *Thriving*
Children and youth are safe, healthy and avoiding risks.

- *Connecting*
Children and youth are experiencing caring, positive relationships with peers and with adults both inside and outside of the family.
- *Contributing*
Children and youth are contributing to their families, neighborhood, and community.

FORMAT OF THE REPORT

The format of this report mirrors that which was used in *Quality of Life in Bartholomew County: Indicators for Improvement 2002-2003* prepared in partnership with Healthy Communities and Heritage Fund of Bartholomew County.

Our Children, Our Opportunity, Our Future consists of five sections based on the five key outcomes noted in the previous section (Learning, Working, Thriving, Connecting, and Contributing). Within each of these five outcomes, information from various points along the developmental continuum from prenatal to age 21 is presented. In some cases there is little available data to tell the story of life for children and youth in our community. In these instances, we continue to be challenged to acquire meaningful data. In other instances, data have recently been collected, and we will wait until the 2007 report to include at least two years of results.

For each of the five outcomes, information will be presented in five subsections, which are entitled:

Why is it important?

A short explanation of the essential domain and its impact on the development of children and youth are given in this section.

How are children and youth doing?

In this section available quantitative data are provided in chart form. The report does not provide in-depth analysis or offer conclusions as to the cause or source of trends.

How is the community supporting children and youth?

At this point in time quantitative data on community support of children and youth are minimal. However, information is available on the type of community programs supporting this population, as well as current information on the status of some of these youth serving organizations. This report does not attempt to identify or elaborate on all of them; just a sampling is presented.

Where can I get more information?

Sources of additional information are offered for the reader who would like to explore any issues in greater depth. In some cases, there are local contacts with whom you can follow up. In all cases, there is additional reading that is suggested.

What can I do?

Many issues around children and youth seem too big for one person to get his/her arms around. Yet in many cases, there are simple ways each of us can contribute to the positive development of children and youth in our community. After all, it's individuals who take action, not communities as a whole. Several suggestions are offered at the conclusion of each section should you be interested in making a personal contribution.

LEARNING

Why is it important?

Life long learning is a key component in the success of any individual.

Education plays a major role in determining Americans' quality of life, especially in their occupational and economic prospects. The youth of today will require more advanced skills in order to be Ready by 21 – to be successful in the work force and to earn a wage to support a family. In addition, the community and its citizens benefit from a well educated work force.

Research shows that the foundation for academic success begins before children enter school. The development of a child's vocabulary is vital to future success. High quality early childhood programs can enhance long-term outcomes for children. Druian and Butler reported in their 2001 study that improving the effectiveness of the home as a learning environment is a key to promoting long-term school success.

The ability to read is critical to learning and academic success, as well. The foundation for acquiring literacy skills must be laid early. In a 1994 study Juel reported children who fall behind in first grade reading have a one in eight chance of ever catching up to grade level without extraordinary efforts.

In addition, writing and mathematics are basics skills every individual must possess. Critical thinking, problem solving, and technology skills are also essential for success and must be developed throughout a child's educational career.

At a minimum every youth should attain a high school diploma. People without high school diplomas earn less than those with more education. Studies have shown that the consequences of dropping out of school are even greater for ethnic and racial minorities. Hispanic students are more than twice as likely as black students and more than three times as likely as white students to drop out of school (*National Center for Education Statistics, 2002*).

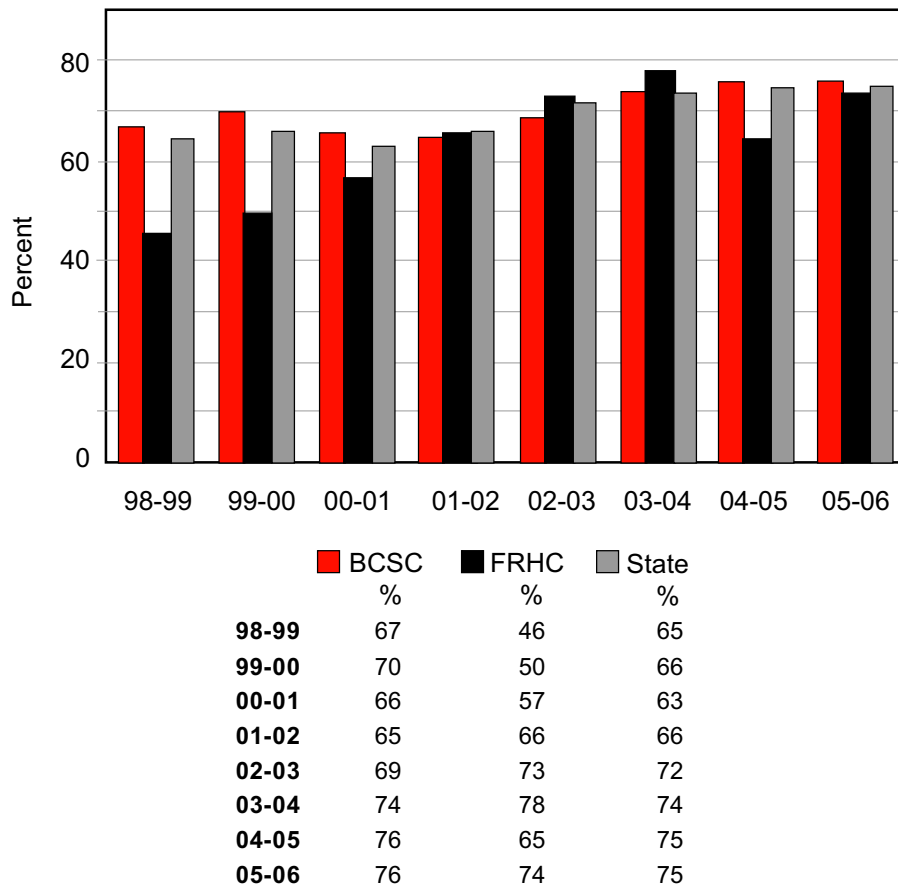
Youth must be prepared to take advantage of post secondary educational opportunities. Increasing numbers of high school students are realizing the importance of education beyond high school and are setting expectations to pursue higher education.

A community's investment in the future is reflected in the range and quality of educational opportunities available to its residents.

How are children and youth doing?

Both county school corporations, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation and Flat Rock-Hawcreek School Corporation, have set the goal of all children reading on grade level by the end of second grade. Results of the language arts section of ISTEP+ taken at the beginning of third grade reflect progress towards the attainment of this goal.

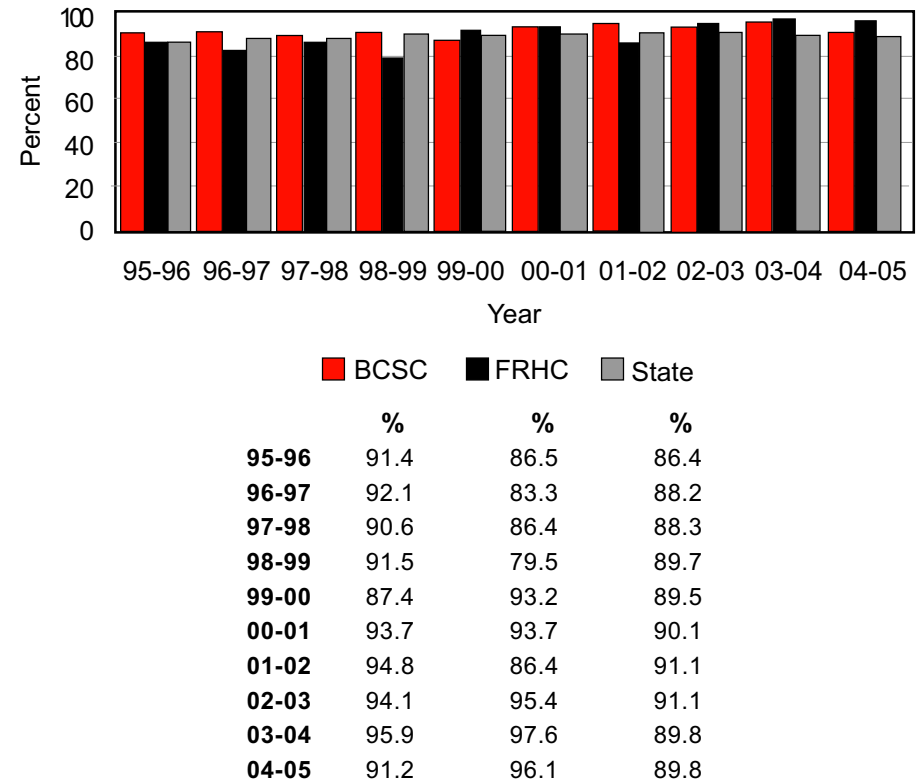
Third Graders Passing ISTEP+Language Arts



Source: Indiana Department of Education
Benchmark: 94%

Determining graduation rates is not as easy as it would seem. Data included in this report represent the graduation formula which the State has used since 1987. Indiana will begin using a new graduation rate calculation starting with the 2005-06 school year (which was not available in time for this report). Based upon current estimates, the new statewide graduation rate for 2005-06 will be approximately 71%.

Graduation Rate



Source: Indiana Department of Education
Benchmark: 100%

How is the community supporting children and youth?

Bridges to Success is a collaborative initiative led by the Council for Youth Development and Childhood Connections. Through a Ready to Learn/Ready Schools grant, this project creates a linkage between school and early care and education environments, with an emphasis on increasing awareness of the importance of quality child care and early education in future school success.

Family School Partners is home based visitation program which assists parents to be their child's first and most important teacher. The program serves families with children ages one to five years. Currently a waiting list of over 50 families exists.

Childhood Connections is Bartholomew County's Child Care and Resource and Referral Program. The organization provides child care options by maintaining a detailed database of child care providers; provides education and technical assistance to parents and providers regarding quality child care; and provides individualized referrals to parents seeking child care, including information on voucher/scholarship program eligibility.

Bartholomew County Literacy Task Force is a group of individuals representing community organizations, businesses and schools who are concerned about literacy within the county. The mission of this task force is for all Bartholomew County residents to be literate. The four main goals are: 1) All children will come to school ready to learn; 2) All students will be reading on grade level by second grade; 3) All parents will be equipped to support their child's education; and 4) All adults will be supportive of the Bartholomew County Literacy initiatives.

Longria Secundaria is a collaborative project among Su Casa Columbus, Columbus Diversity Partnership, BCSSC ESL Program, and the Council for Youth Development established to fund a comprehensive in-depth study of the achievement gap for the Latino minority group in high school. The goal is for the creation of a plan to develop culturally responsive and thoughtful solutions and strategies to overcome the challenges to the new roles being assumed on either side of the issue with the end result of

increased numbers of Latino youth receiving high school diplomas.

Post secondary opportunities are available at a number of local educational institutions, including Indiana University Purdue University Columbus, Ivy Tech State College, Purdue University College of Technology, Indiana Business College, and Indiana Wesleyan University.

The Community Education Coalition is a partnership of education, business, and community stakeholders that promotes a learning system that offers accessible, affordable education for students of all ages. In 2005 the Coalition dedicated the Columbus Learning Center, which houses classrooms, laboratories and support services for local educational institutions, as well as Columbus offices of WorkOne.

This section highlights only a few of the many organizations and activities which are supporting learning in Bartholomew County.

Where can I get more information?

- Indiana Department of Education www.doe.state.in.us
- Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation www.BCSC.k12.in.us
- Flat Rock-Hawcreek School Corporation www.flatrock.K12.in.us
- Indiana University Purdue University Columbus www.columbus.iupui.edu
- Ivy Tech College www.ivytech.edu/columbus
- Childhood Connections (812) 375-220 www.childhoodconnections.org
- Trip to College www.TriptoCollege.org
- Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families (202) 638-114 www.zerotothree.org

What can I do?

- Talk to children.
- Read to children.
- Use a checklist when selecting child care – available by contacting Childhood Connections (812) 375-2208.
- Write letters or send cards to children and youth. Include a compliment or congratulations on something they have done well.
- Volunteer to be a Book Buddy. Give one hour a week of your time for 25 weeks to tutor two students for 30 minutes each. Materials and training are provided; all the tutor has to do is provide the TLC. Contact Mickey Land at (812) 376-4461 or landm@bcsc.k12.in.us
- Participate in community literacy activities.
- Volunteer at a local school.
- Give books, children's magazine subscription, puzzles, or games as gifts.
- Monitor children's TV and video game activities.
- Volunteer to serve as a mentor for senior projects.
- Take advantage of continuing education courses offered throughout the community.

WORKING

Why is it important?

Our country is built on the principle of working to earn a living. Having secure employment with earnings sufficient to meet basic needs affects the quality of life. The odds of having good nutrition, decent stable housing, and adequate health care increase. Fewer stressors are experienced resulting in a more positive home setting and improved family functioning. Employment creates a wider social network, which contributes to better physical and mental health. Wider social networks also expand access to information and resources. Ideally we would like to see every individual earn at least a family-supporting wage that reflects the cost of living in his area of residence.

In order for children and youth to attain jobs with family-supporting wages (at a minimum) or pursue careers in their areas of interest, the groundwork must be laid early. They need to have knowledge about the world of work – a sense of purpose or positive attitude toward work and a pathway to employment.

Just as in other areas of development, children and youth are influenced by experiences during childhood and adolescence. Families, friends, neighbors, and schools affect children’s attitude toward work and understanding of its role in their lives. For example, the feedback received for completing household chores, assisting family members or neighbors with a task, or completing schoolwork shapes a child’s feelings and beliefs about work. As a child matures, these attitudes become internalized. Children are also influenced by the attitudes of others toward work. The example set by the adults in their lives has a bearing on their view of work.

The pathway to employment requires the development of skills and knowledge. Because development of basic skills bears a strong relationship to future earnings and employment, students must see the payoff to learning more clearly and more realistically. They must comprehend the importance of education and the mastery of academic

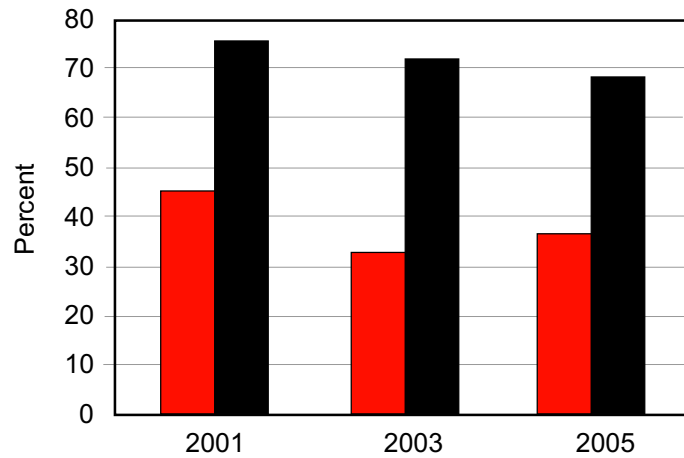
standards. With the transition to the Information Age, thinking skills (decision making, problem solving, reasoning and creative thinking) have become even more important in the workplace.

In addition, children and youth must develop soft skills, which include work habits and social skills. Employers say that among their most pressing need is for soft skills, such as attendance, dependability, perseverance, integrity, self-management, initiative, attention to quality, and the ability to work with others. Employees with these attributes are more successful and contribute to the success of a business or organization.

A community’s investment in the future should include strategies which assist children and youth in developing their attitude toward and sense of purpose of work along with the development of the skills necessary for successful employment. Not only will the children and youth benefit, so will the economy of the community.

How are children and youth doing?

Worked for Pay Outside Home

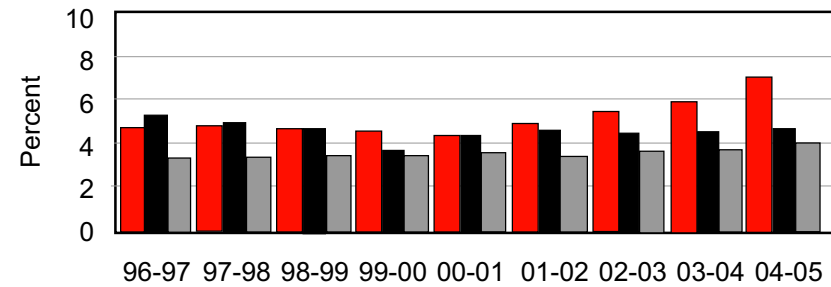


	BCSC % Grade 6	BCSC % Grade 12
2001	45.4	75.8
2003	32.6	72.1
2005	36.7	68.2

Source: Indiana Prevention Resource Center

The data reflect the responses of BCSC students on the biannual survey conducted by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center. Flat Rock-Hawcreek students do not participate in the survey.

Students Enrolled in Vocational Education

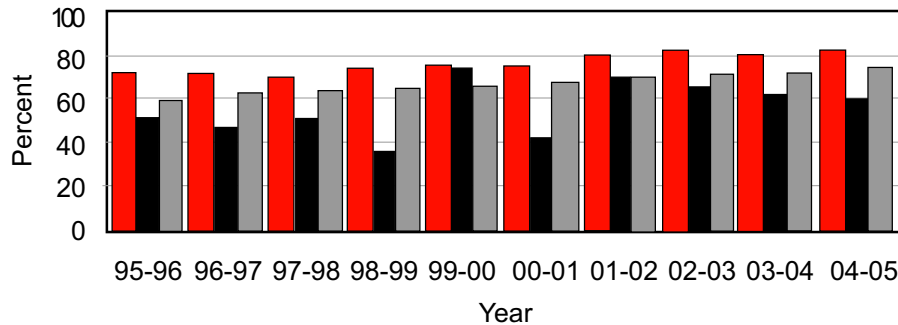


Year	BCSC %	FRHC %	State %
96-97	4.7	5.2	3.3
97-98	4.8	4.9	3.4
98-99	4.6	4.6	3.5
99-00	4.5	3.7	3.5
00-01	4.3	4.3	3.6
01-02	4.8	4.6	3.4
02-03	5.4	4.4	3.7
03-04	5.9	4.4	3.8
04-05	7.0	4.6	4.1

Source:
Indiana Department
of Education

Both area school corporations offer vocational classes to students, which provide them with both classroom and hands-on training.

College Attendance Rate



	BCSC %	FRHC %	State %
95-96	72.5	51.8	59.0
96-97	71.7	47.5	62.5
97-98	70.4	51.8	63.9
98-99	74.7	36.7	64.9
99-00	76.8	74.6	66.1
00-01	76.9	42.4	67.7
01-02	80.4	69.4	69.1
02-03	82.3	66.1	71.1
03-04	80.4	62.5	72.1
04-05	82.3	59.4	74.2

Source: Indiana Department of Education
Benchmark: 100%

The report includes the percentage of graduates who attend a four-year college or university or a two- year college or university.

How is the community supporting children and youth?

Drive of Your Life, a web-based program on career exploration, was presented to middle and high school guidance counselors through a workshop sponsored by the Council for Youth Development. It is an individualized program that helps students with career and course planning through learning about themselves, finding careers that match their style, and planning to make it possible. Drive of Your Life was also featured at Driving Youth Development, the Council’s family event.

C4 Columbus Area Career Connection helps provide area students with the skills and knowledge necessary to find a career that matches their interests. In the program students acquire marketable skills by experiencing both classroom and hands-on training, giving them the edge in the job market immediately after high school or during post-secondary education.

Stepping Stones – Through Yes Cinema, a component of Lincoln Central Neighborhood Family Center, job training is offered to youth, who are neighborhood residents. These young employees receive training to develop specific skills, such as running a cash register, providing good customer service, and operating theater equipment, as well as soft skills, such as attendance, appropriate attire, working with others, and initiative. This part time employment serves as a stepping stone to full time employment in other jobs.

This section highlights only a few of the organizations and activities in Bartholomew County which are supporting the developmental domain of working.

Where can I get more information?

- Drive of Youth Life www.DriveOfYourLife.org
- C4 Columbus Area Career Connection www.c4.k12.in.us
- Career Exploration Guides and Resources for Younger Students www.khake.com
- Exploring Careers Information from Bureau of Labor Statistics www.bls.gov/k12/
- Lincoln Central Neighborhood Family Center (812) 379-1630
- Roots & Shoots www.rootsandshoots.org
- Learn & Serve America www.learnandserve.org

What can I do?

- Increase children’s awareness of jobs. Talk with children about jobs as you go about your daily life. For example, discuss the jobs of people at the grocery store, school, or bank as you visit them. Driving by the fire station, city hall, or newspaper office could trigger a conversation on the jobs people are performing.
- Assist children in developing social skills from the basic (using “please” and “thank you”, having a firm hand shake, or looking someone in the eye when talking) to the more complex (demonstrating self-control, handling conflicts, or engaging in conversations with new acquaintances).
- Provide children with opportunities to work by giving them tasks that are age-appropriate.
- Praise children when they complete chores or a task you have requested. Make a special note of what was done well.
- Facilitate opportunities for children to pursue areas of interest or areas in which they demonstrate a talent.
- Set a good example for children. Let them see you using those personal skills that employers expect, such as dependability, perseverance, integrity, self-management, initiative, attention to quality, and the ability to work with others.
- Encourage young people to register to vote and then vote once they have turned 18.

THRIVING

Why is it important?

In order for children and youth to thrive, a number of elements must be addressed. The first is at birth. Being a healthy full-term baby with normal birth weight offers a good beginning. The likelihood of this happening occurs when pregnant mothers receive prenatal care, eat properly and eliminate risk factors, such as drinking alcohol, smoking, or using drugs.

Children must also have their basic needs of food and shelter provided in order to thrive.

Children require well balanced nutritional meals and need guidance in developing healthy eating habits. In addition, opportunities for physical activity must be provided for youth to maintain a healthy weight. Growing numbers of overweight and obese young people have focused the spotlight on preventing obesity in children and adolescents. In addition to the immediate consequences to overweight youth, long-term health problems are likely.

Children thrive in environments that are safe and supportive of healthy, positive development. Safe environments minimize the risk to children from accidents, violence, and hazardous conditions, whether the location is home, school, motor vehicle, neighborhood, or community. Campaigns addressing lead based paint, bike helmets, children's car seats, and seat belts are indicative of the focus on children's safety.

Access to appropriate health care increases the likelihood of children thriving. Families need affordable access to routine and preventative medical care, such as well-child visits and immunizations. Dental and vision care are also essential to a child's healthy development.

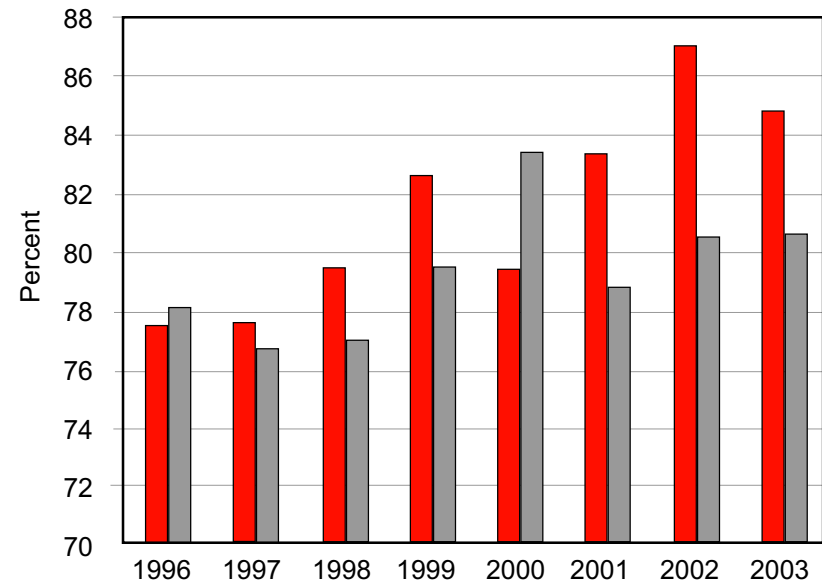
Risk taking is a normal part of growing up. Children and youth can take risks which are healthy and contribute to their development and establishing their personal identity. However, negative risk taking behaviors can be dangerous and hinder development. High risk behaviors include drinking, smoking, drug use, reckless driving, and sexual activity.

A community is wise to focus on the health and safety issues of the young since developing good habits early in life is an important predictor of later well-being.

How are children and youth doing?

This is a reporting of the percent of pregnant women who began care during the first three months of pregnancy.

Mothers Who Received 1st Trimester Prenatal Care



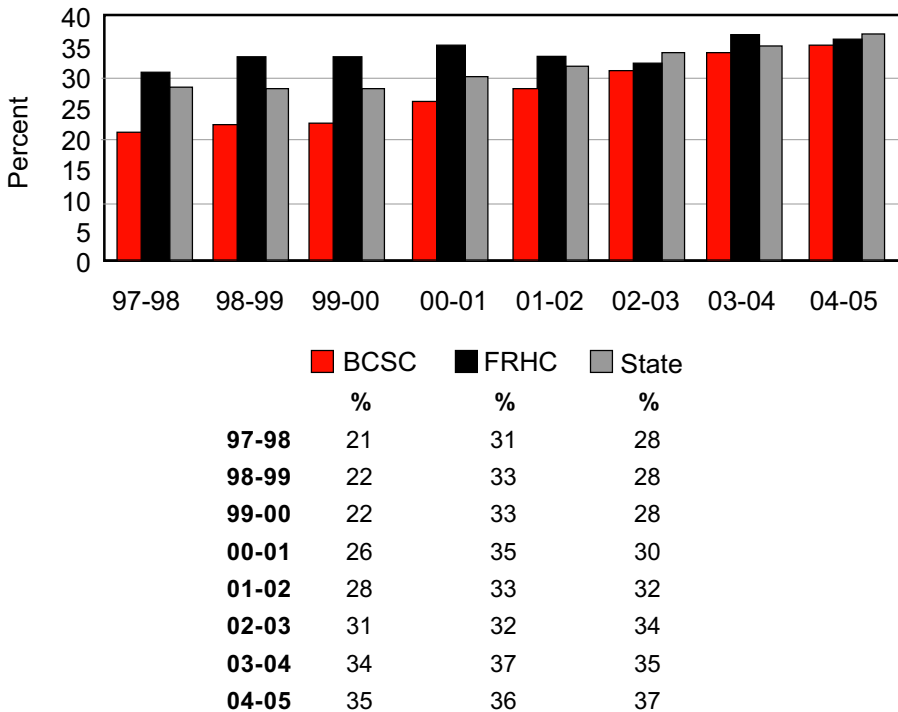
■ Bartholomew County % ■ State %

1996	77.5	78.1
1997	77.6	76.7
1998	79.5	77.0
1999	82.62	79.52
2000	79.4	83.4
2001	83.3	78.8
2002	87.0	80.5
2003	84.8	80.6

Source: Indiana State Department of Health
Benchmark: 93.5

This shows the percent of public and private school students in grades K-12 who were eligible to receive free lunches and textbooks. Students from families with incomes below 130% of the poverty guidelines are eligible for free meals. Under a state program initiated during the 1999-2000 school year, all public school students in Indiana who are eligible for free meals are also eligible for free textbooks.

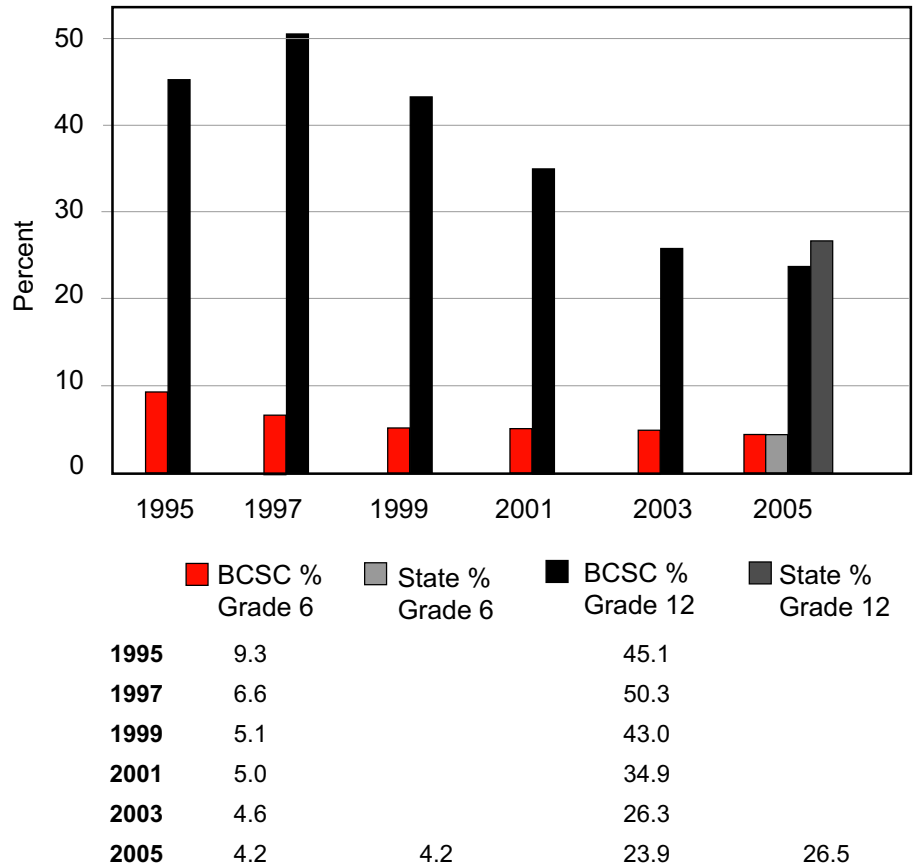
Students Receiving Free Lunches/Textbooks



Source: Indiana Department of Education

The data reflect the responses of BCSC students on the biannual survey conducted by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center. Flat Rock-Hawcreek students do not participate in the survey.

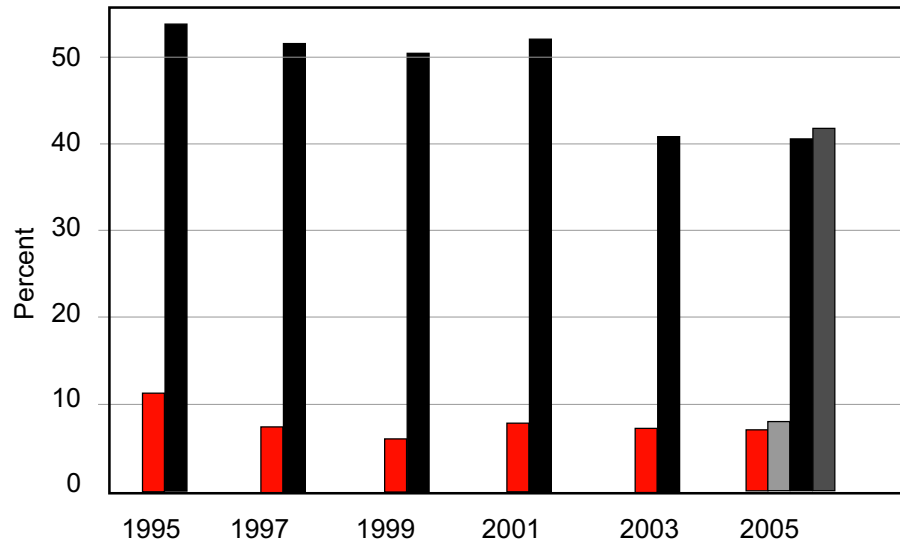
Monthly Tobacco (Cigarettes) Use



Source: Indiana Prevention Resource Center

The data reflect the responses of BCSC students on the biannual survey conducted by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center. Flat Rock-Hawcreek students do not participate in the survey.

Monthly Alcohol Consumption



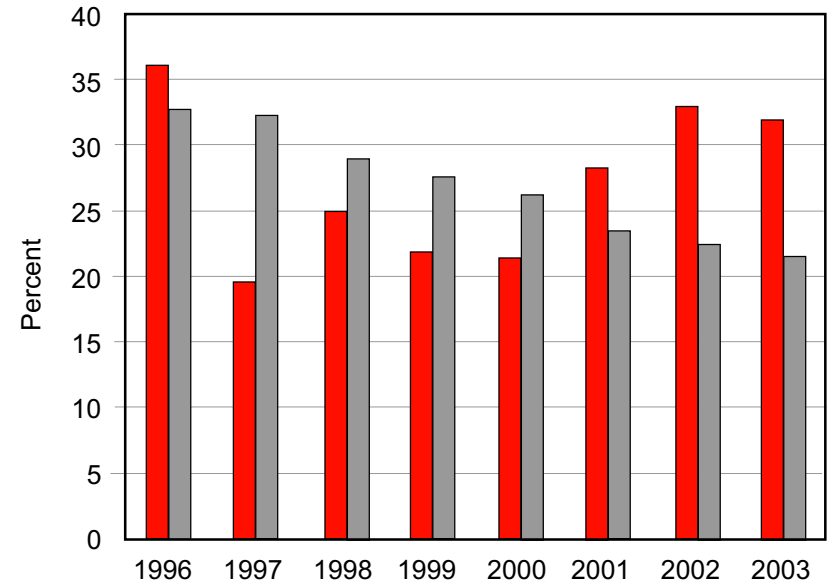
	BCSC % Grade 6	State % Grade 6	BCSC % Grade 12	State % Grade 12
1995	11.4		53.7	
1997	7.5		51.4	
1999	6.2		50.2	
2001	8.0		52.0	
2003	7.4		40.9	
2005	7.2	8.1	40.6	41.8

Source: Indiana Prevention Resource Center

The data reflect the number of births to mothers ages 15 through 17 per 1,000 females in this age group.

Teen Birth Rate, Ages 15-17

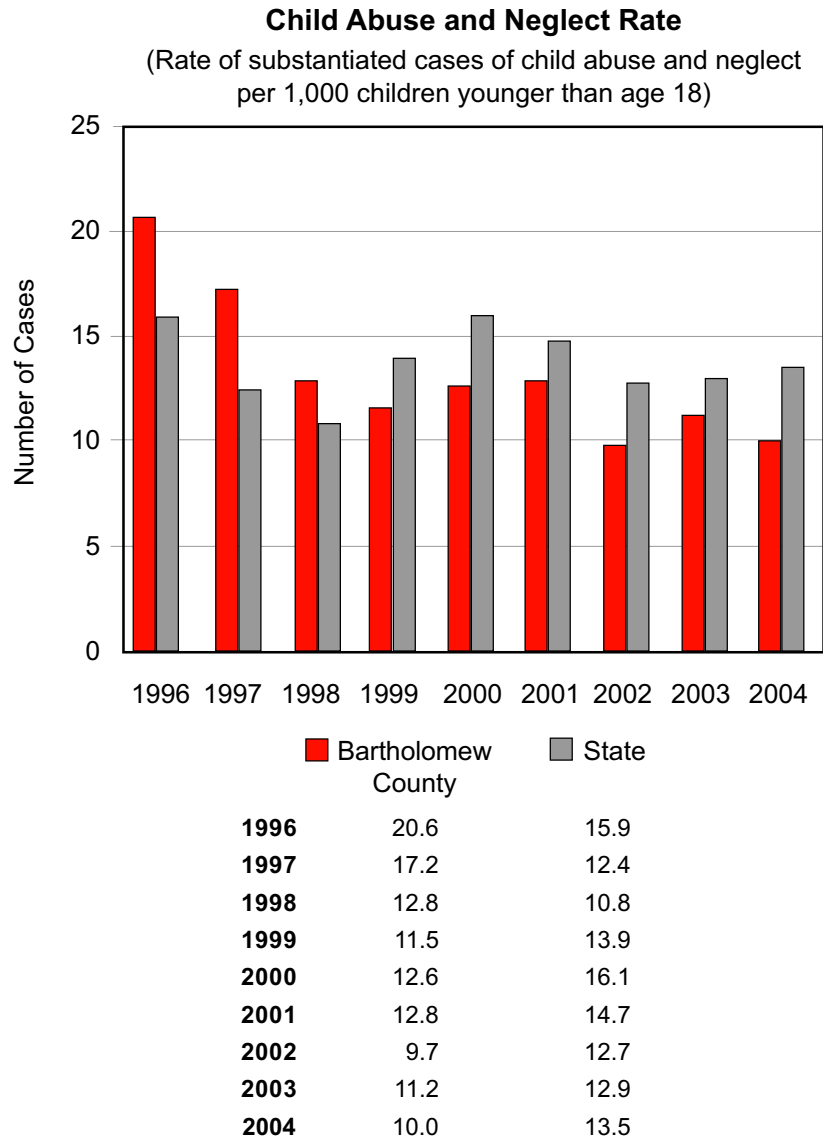
(Number of births per 1,000 females in this age group)



Year	Bartholomew County %	State %
1996	36.1	32.7
1997	19.6	32.1
1998	25.1	28.9
1999	21.82	27.38
2000	21.3	26.2
2001	28.2	23.7
2002	32.9	22.5
2003	32.0	21.5

Source: Indiana State Department of Health
Benchmark: 5

This is a reporting of the percent of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children younger than age 18.



Source: Indiana Department of Child Services
Benchmark: 3.4

How is the community supporting children and youth?

Partners in Pregnancy is a program for pregnant women on Hoosier Healthwise or who have applied for it. Women receive four home nursing visits – 1 per trimester and 1 within 60 days after the birth of the baby. The program encourages proper nutrition and health during pregnancy, assists with pregnancy-related issues, serves as a liaison with the doctor’s office, and offers social, financial and emotional support as well as referrals.

Healthy Families is a home visitation program to assist parents of newborns and children 0-5 years in providing for healthy, safe and successful emotional and intellectual development.

School Wellness Policies were developed in local corporations as part of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act. Teams of community members collaborated to develop wellness policies that include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.

Columbus Parks and Recreation offers opportunities for children and youth to be engaged in activities that promote healthy living. A myriad of classes and camps are available throughout the year. A number of sports programs are open to youth. Tennis, golf, hockey, soccer, swimming, gymnastics are just a few. A recent project, supported by Parks and Rec, is Freedom Field, which is an inclusive outdoor recreational facility that allows children with special needs to access a playground with a chance to interact with their able-bodied peers.

Foundation for Youth has been serving the youth and families of the community for over eighty years. The organization offers a variety of programming for athletics and aquatics, Boys & Girls Club, teens, and Columbus Youth Camp.

The Tobacco Awareness Action Team is one of seven action teams of Healthy Communities. This team has initiated several programs since its inception in 1996 to reduce the use of tobacco products in Bartholomew County, especially among children.

Volunteers in Medicine, also a component of Healthy Communities, seeks to remove barriers so that every Bartholomew County resident is

known and cared for by a primary healthcare provider, working together to increase the use of appropriate self care. VIM is a free healthcare clinic for Bartholomew County residents who meet income guidelines and have no health insurance. Such services as acute primary care (such as ear infections and strep throat), annual physicals and sports physicals, and chronic care management (such as high blood pressure) are provided.

Proyecto Salud Spanish Language Health Clinic seeks to eliminate barriers to healthcare for low income Latin Americans. As one of the seven action teams of Healthy Communities, volunteers staff a weekly bilingual clinic at VIM, and also serve as a network of interpreters that assist patients who receive care from other health providers, offer support and advocacy for expectant women, host educational and outreach events, and staff a healthcare helpline.

Y-Med (Young Mothers Educational Development) assists young mothers or expectant teens in completing their high school education both before and after birth of a child. Classes on human development, child development, and family relations are offered. Support services include prenatal care coordination, client counseling, and a licensed child care center available for students with children three weeks to age two.

This section highlights only a few of the organizations and activities in Bartholomew County which are supporting the developmental domain of thriving.

Where can I get more information?

- Columbus Parks and Recreation (812) 376-2680 www.columbus.in.gov/parks
- Foundation for Youth (812) 372-7867 www.foundationforyouth.com
- Healthy Communities www.crh.org/healthy_communities
- Y-Med (Young Mothers Educational Development) (812) 376-4453 www.y-medinc.com
- National SAFE KIDS Campaign (202) 662-0600 www.safekids.org

- Child Trends (202) 362-5580 www.childtrends.org
- The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (202) 261-5655 www.teenpregnancy.org

What can I do?

- Ensure that children follow safe practices, such as wearing helmets when biking, using seat belts, wearing appropriate protective gear when participating in sports, or using child safety restraints.
- Practice fire drills.
- Make sure smoke alarms are in good working order.
- Encourage children and youth to be physically active. Join them yourself.
- Volunteer at Volunteers in Medicine. Call 376-9750.
- Set a good example by demonstrating healthy eating habits.
- Serve healthy snacks to children and youth.

CONNECTING

Why is it important?

Just as children must have their basic needs (food, shelter, and safety) met, they also have a need for love, affection and belonging. These come from relationships with others. At a higher level there is also the need for esteem, which includes self-respect and respect for others; again these come from relationships with others.

Thus it is essential that children and youth have positive relationships with adults and peers to be fully prepared and Ready by 21™. Children and youth require consistent, on-going relationships with caring adults. This means they have frequent contact with adults who offer them attention, respect, high expectations, and affection over time. These are adults whose support is unconditional and who stand by them and guide them through their rough times. They are adults with whom they have a connection, who are good role models, and who provide feedback. The voice of those supportive, caring adults becomes part of the youth's voice.

In addition to those adults with whom children and youth have close, connected relationships, young people benefit from being surrounded by adults, both within and outside of their family, who convey compassion, understanding, respect, and interest in them.

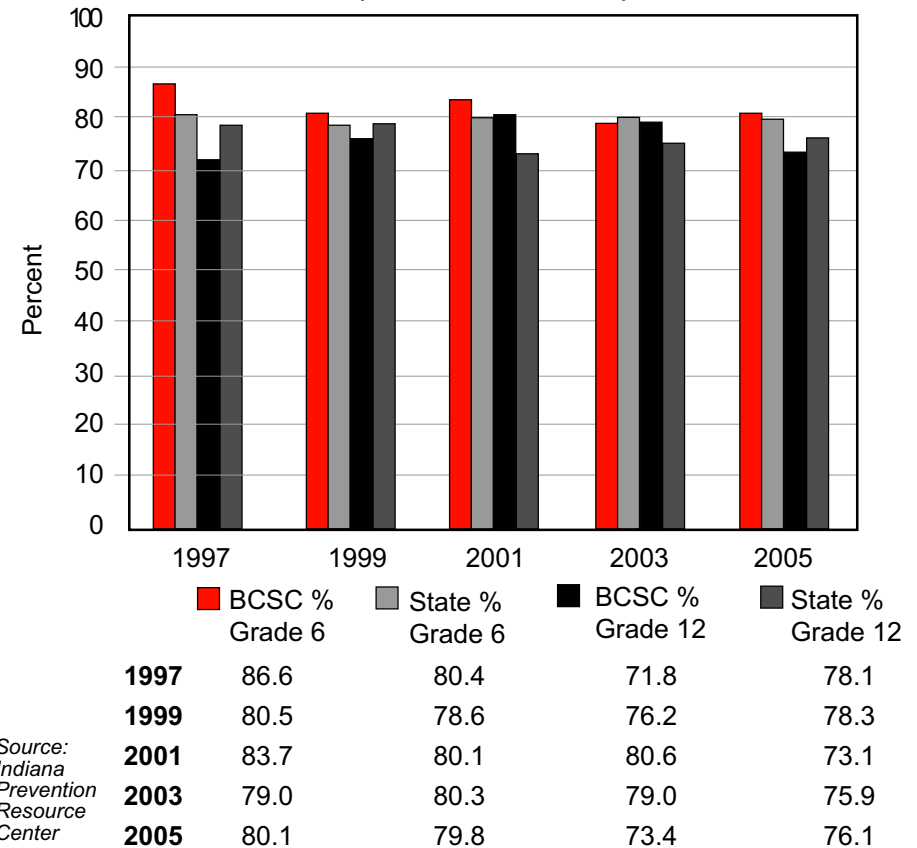
The need to belong has been suggested to be one of the strongest human motivational needs. So it is not surprising that youth have an intense need to fit in or belong to a group. Once they are a part of the group, they begin adopting its behaviors and values which may be healthy or not. Communities need to offer many and varied opportunities for youth to join a group, team, or club that functions in a healthy environment. Youth who feel connected and have a sense of belonging usually increase healthy behaviors and decrease high-risk behaviors.

Childhood and adolescence are full of opportunities and risks. Communities play an essential role by increasing the opportunities and decreasing the risks by ensuring that young people have continued exposure to positive experiences, structured settings, and caring people.

How are children and youth doing?

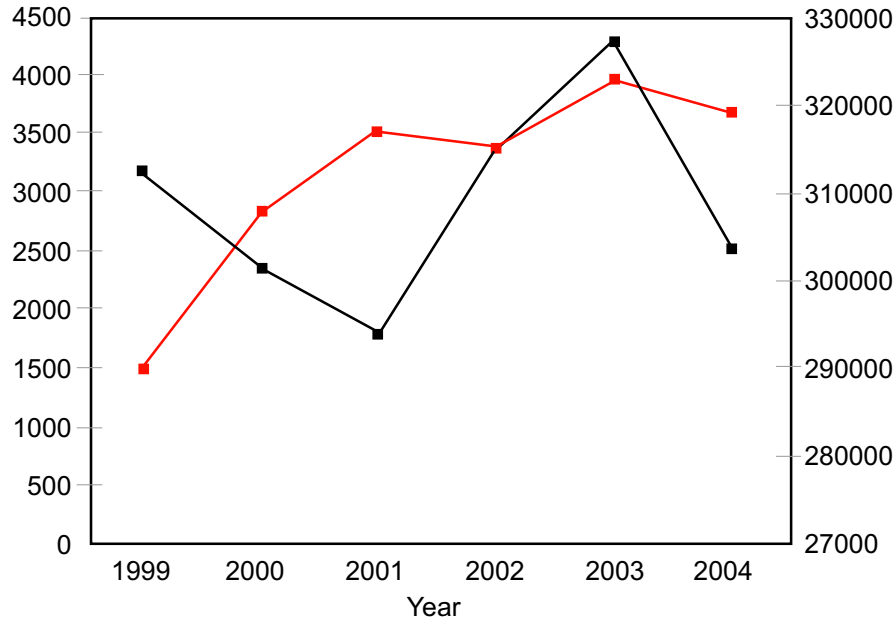
The data reflect the responses of BCSC students on the biannual survey conducted by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center. Flat Rock-Hawcreek students do not participate in the survey.

**Participated in Organized Family Events
(at least once a week)**



The data represent the combined number of expulsions and suspensions for all causes in kindergarten through grade 12 in public schools. Suspensions include out-of-school and in-school suspensions.

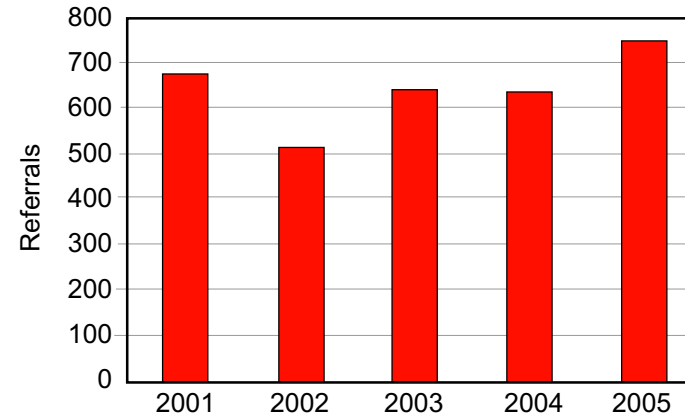
School Suspensions and Expulsions



	Bartholomew County	State
1999	1,514	312,202
2000	2,813	301,243
2001	3,491	293,919
2002	3,364	314,699
2003	3,934	326,808
2004	3,660	303,543

The data reflect an accounting of all Bartholomew County children and youth brought to the Youth Services Center. Youth may have a detention or shelter placement or may return to their parents' care without immediate placement. Youth are referred for everything from the most serious delinquent offenses to being a child in need of services (CHINS).

Referrals to Bartholomew County Youth Services Center



2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
672	510	636	631	746

Source: Bartholomew County Youth Services Center

How is the community supporting children and youth?

The **Youth Mobilizer Program** is an initiative of the Council for Youth Development, whose mission is to increase community investment in youth. The Youth Mobilizer Program directly engages young people in meaningful ways in this community initiative to strengthen the supports, resources, and opportunities for youth within the community. Through the program, youth partner with adults in a collaborative process of research and reflection on youth-identified issues with the goal of community change. In addition, the youth build their skills and capacities as decision makers, problem solvers, advocates, and leaders.

Big Brothers Big Sisters facilitates one to one mentoring relationships between adults and children in schools, other sites or in the community at large. In the school-based program matches are able to play games, work on reading skills, talk to one another, or participate in learning a new skill. They meet weekly at a set time for one hour during the school year. In the community-based program, adults and children meet during weekends or evenings to learn and laugh together. Whether it is going to a museum, visiting a local restaurant or hanging out at home, matches have the chance to discover and explore new areas and a chance to connect. Currently Big Brothers Big Sisters has a waiting list of youth seeking an adult match.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are adults who are trained and assigned by a court to watch over children and assure they quickly find a permanent and safe home. The program has a waiting list of children needing to have a CASA appointed to them.

Domestic Violence Action Team, an action team of Healthy Communities, is addressing the problem of domestic violence. Youth are 1500 times more likely to be an abuser if he/she comes from an abusive environment. Knowing that, the DV Action Team is focusing efforts to break the cycle of domestic violence by addressing the younger generation. Steps being taken include providing training for personnel of schools and youth serving agencies, developing standard protocol for addressing child victims of domestic violence, and strengthening

educational curriculum, which addresses building and maintaining healthy relationships.

Bullying Prevention Task Force, comprised of school personnel and community members, addresses the issue of bullying. The group adopted the Olweus Bullying Prevention Model to reduce bullying among elementary and middle school students. Intervention strategies are directed at community-wide, school-wide, classroom and individual levels. Students were surveyed on this topic for the first time this year.

Caring Parents is a volunteer-staffed home visitor program that provides parent education, information, and support to Bartholomew County parents of infants up to one year of age. The focus of the program is on building positive parent-child relationships and coping with stress, including crying baby education. Health and safety gifts are given at each of six visits during the year. Although varying monthly, an average waiting list of 20 families is seeking enrollment in the program.

This section highlights only a few of the organizations and activities in Bartholomew County which are supporting the developmental domain of connecting.

Where can I get more information?

- Big Brothers Big Sisters (812) 348-4558 www.foundationforyouth.com/bbbs
- Caring Parents (812) 375-6748
- 4-H Purdue Extension Service (812) 379-1665)
- Boy Scouts of America (812) 336-6809
- Girl Scouts (812) 336-6804
- Columbus Area Arts Council www.artsINColumbus.org
- Healthy Communities www.crh.org/healthy_communities
- Child Trends (202) 362-5580 www.childtrends.org
- Columbus Parks and Recreation (812) 376-2680 www.columbus.in.gov/parks
- Foundation for Youth (812) 372-7867 www.foundationforyouth.com

What can I do?

- Smile at children and youth as you pass them.
- Give your full attention and listen to children and youth when they talk to you.
- Establish a routine of talking with your children when they are young, such as every night before they go to bed. As a teen, he/she is likely to be knocking on your door for a goodnight chat after an evening out with friends.
- Dance with your child or grandchild.
- Mentor a child or youth in an area which the child has an interest and you have the expertise.
- Coach an athletic team.
- Attempt constructive conversations with children and youth. When talking avoid “you statements” such as “You never listen to me” or “You never told me where you were going.” Try “I statements” like “I guess I haven’t done a very good job of explaining myself to you” and “I don’t remember you mentioning you were going to Joe’s.”
- Be a leader for a youth organization, such as a 4-H Club, Scout troop, or church youth group.
- Volunteer to be a Big Brother or Big Sister. Call (812) 376-3077 for information.
- Volunteer to be a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). Call (812) 372-2808 to learn more.
- Volunteer to be a Caring Parent. Call 375-6748 for more information.
- Interact with children you see frequently, such as children at church or children of friends. Offer your care and support by talking with them, attending events in which they are involved, sending them notes or cards, and praising them for small actions which you observe, such as holding the door open for someone or starting a conversation with someone who is alone.
- When talking with children, ask questions until you begin to see their side of things. When you begin to understand their perspective, stop and listen.
- Volunteer to assist with children/youth activities sponsored by one of the local arts and cultural organizations.
- Attend events in which youth perform, such as plays, recitals, or sporting events.
- Create a “Caring Neighborhood.” Make a homework help list and ask adults in the neighborhood to list their area(s) of expertise. Distribute this list to children and teens in the neighborhood. They then know whom to call when they have a science fair project or cannot master a math concept.

CONTRIBUTING

Why is it important?

Communities benefit when residents value citizenship and service. By sharing talents and skills, volunteers contribute to the community, but also personally experience a number of positive psychological, social, and health outcomes. This is true not only for adults, but youth as well.

In a Gallop poll teens reported benefits received from volunteering included learning to respect others; learning to be helpful and kind; learning to understand people who are different from them; developing leadership skills; becoming more patient; and better understanding of good citizenship.

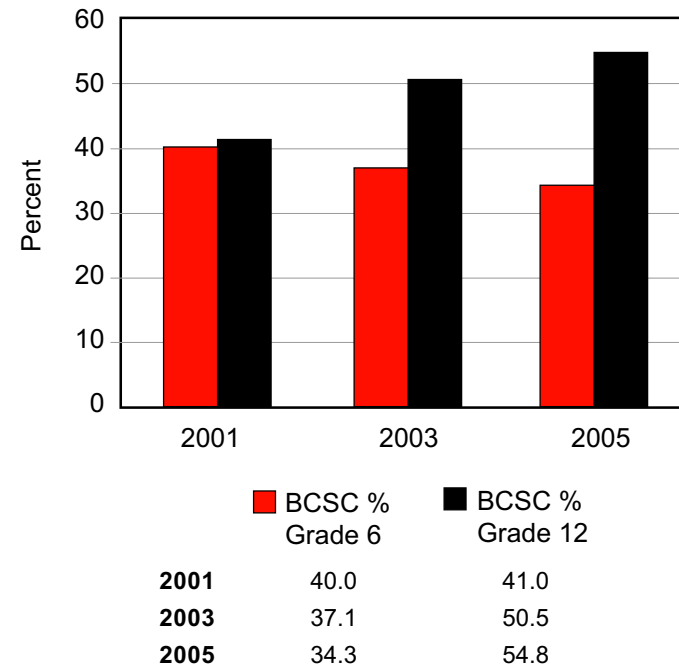
A research brief from *Child Trends* reported that experimental evaluations show that programs aimed at increasing civic engagement may have the following positive outcomes for young people:

- Improved achievement on academic tests
- Lower dropout and suspension rates and improved engagement with school
- Less likelihood of alcohol consumption and improved reactions to situations involving drug use
- Improved attitudes toward older people
- Increased likelihood of performing community service activity
- Increased attention to the news
- Decreased likelihood of teen pregnancy and childbearing

With all of these potential positive benefits from engaging youth in volunteer activities, how could a community not provide volunteer opportunities for its youth?

How are children and youth doing?

Volunteer Outside Home



Source: Indiana Prevention Resource Center

The data reflect the responses of BCSC students on the biannual survey conducted by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center. Flat Rock-Hawcreek students do not participate in the survey.

How is the community supporting children and youth?

Service Learning Projects are led by educators at many local schools as they provide students with opportunities to give to the community. A small sample of students' giving locally include raising funds to purchase food for the Humane Society, providing suitcases filled with toiletries for foster children, donating gently used books to book drives, and sending cards of kindness to brighten someone's day.

Volunteers in Action serves as a clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities in the community. Children and youth are often included in VAC activities, such as Martin Luther King Day of Service and Make a Difference Day. Providing service learning programs in schools is another service offered.

Youth As Resources is a program of the Foundation for Youth which provides grants for youth led community service projects. A youth and adult board award funding up to \$500. The process includes training on project development, grant writing, implementation, and celebration.

This section highlights only a few of the organizations and activities in Bartholomew County which are supporting the developmental domain of contributing.

Where can I get more information?

- Volunteer Action Center (812) 375-2210 www.uwbarthco.org/vac
- Corporation for National and Community Service www.nationalservice.org
- Idealist.org www.idealists.org
- Kids Voting USA www.kidsvotingusa.org

What can I do?

- Facilitate children's participation in local charitable activities, such as local food drives, book drives, tab top collections, or United Way Youth Campaign.
- Volunteer at schools or in community organizations to assist young people in service learning projects.
- Demonstrate environmental responsibility by engaging children in recycling.
- Determine ways in which youth could volunteer to assist your organization with special events.
- Engage children and youth in discussions around local, state, and national issues. Encourage them to develop their own opinions, including their reasoning for their stance.
- Encourage young people to register to vote and then vote once they have turned 18 years of age.

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Council for Youth Development

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Youth Hope

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United Way of Bartholomew County

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