Communities In Schools of Spokane County (CISSC) wants to thank Nicholas Pace and his team for putting this extensive document together. We are providing this information in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic so many of the indicator presented are substantially worse at this moment. However, we want our partners, elected officials, and the general public to have as much information as possible about children because they continue to be a low priority in the State of Washington.

The trauma many children and families are currently experiencing will be with us for years and left untreated, will scar them for many years to come. Domestic violence is rampant at this time with the courts quickly releasing batterers back into society. Children are not being observed at school so child abuse reports have dropped dramatically.

I would welcome any comments or concerns about the data or any child related issues. CISSC has never stopped helping children and families during this difficult time. We will continue providing services as another horrific school year of food insecurity, family stress and technology-based education creates the most massive inequities in recent memory.

Chuck Teegarden, Executive Director
Communities In Schools of Spokane County
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Part 1: Introduction:
The purpose of this report is to inform the community about and analyze trends of Spokane County’s health and development of children and their families using verified, quantifiable data. At the request of Communities in School (CIS) of Spokane County, comparisons have been specifically made between Spokane County and King County for context. Please note that all data is from accredited, open sources and all data is from sample estimates. Links will be provided for cross-referencing and fact-checking, which also includes the margins of error and confidence intervals if any reasonable doubt should arise about the data.

The open source cloud software RStudio was used to create the charts and to analyze data trends.

The following data sources have been referenced, along with their links:
- The American Community Survey Estimates of the U.S. Census, 5 year Estimates Tables
- The Healthy Youth Survey (HYS)
- The Washington Department of Health (WA DOH) Data and Statistical Reports, including:
  - The Washington State Immunization Information System (IIS)
  - WA DOH Data and Statistical Reports

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THE DATA TABLES FOR THOSE FACT-CHECKING DATA:

Whenever a Y-axis is labeled as “Percent” the quantity is in decimal to provide more detail and is NOT a decimal of a percent; in other words, a value of 014 should be interpreted as 1%, not .014 percent. Whenever a Y-axis value is labeled as “Quantity” it is referring to the numerator that make up the variable corresponding to the table.

Part 2: Economic and Social Factors
A. Children in Poverty
The United States Census Estimates, which was used predominately in this research regarding socio-economic variables of Spokane County’s residents, determines poverty as when a family’s income is less than its adjusted income threshold (taxes, inflation, costs-of-living, etc.) More detailed information about that definition can be found here (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

From 2010-2018, Spokane’s estimated rate of poverty among families with more than one child had a maximum level of a little less than 20% in 2015 and declined incrementally afterwards. As of 2018, the rate of children in poverty has not met the level of near-17% in 2011. It is also possible that future data will reveal, with the rise COVID-19, that the downward trend in children in poverty will revert. This rate of poverty in Spokane County compared to King County, though lower in quantity due to the smaller population in Spokane County, has been consistently larger percentage-wise than King County, though both counties run in near-parallel progressions (see figures 1.a.1 and 1.a.2).
1.a.1.: Estimated percentage of households below poverty line that contain at least one individual 18-years-old or younger.

Whether a child’s family receives and is most likely dependent on government or other public assistance can be an indicator of a child’s socioeconomic outlook. The U.S. Census Estimates report the estimated

1.a.2.: Estimated quantity of households below poverty line that contain at least one individual 18-years-old or younger.
quantity of families who are recipients of Social Security Insurance, any type of Cash Public Assistance Income, or Food Stamp/SNAP benefits, (See Table ID S0901 in the U.S. Census Estimates). The U.S. Census data in tables 1.a.3 and 1.a.4 display those Census survey results for Spokane and King County.

1.a.3: Estimated percentage of families receiving supplemental services

1.a.4: Estimated quantity of families receiving supplemental services

Note the similarities and correlation of the graphs that detail supplemental service benefits (1.a.3 and 1.a.4) and the aforementioned children in poverty graphs from the U.S. Census Estimates (1.a.1 and
1.a.2). There is no direct or absolute correlation between those who receive benefits and those who reside near the poverty line, as not all those who are on disability and receive SSI for example are necessarily poor and/or are raising children. Nevertheless, many families with children rely on external aid such as SSI to weather the effects of poverty.

The cost of living for families is an integral factor in child growth and development. The U.S. Census Estimates publishes a report on which households have high housing cost burdens if they make the following criteria of spending more or equal to 30 percent of their income on housing and if that income is $20,000 or less. It’s worth noting that, according to the 2010-2018 U.S. Census Estimates, the majority of households in both King and Spokane County who earn $20,000 or less annual income spend more than 30% of their earnings on housing costs, (see US Census TableID S2503).

The following graphs (1.a.5 and 1.a.5) showcase, contrast, and compare Spokane and King County’s trends of rates of high housing burdens from 2010-2016. Note the near static rate of change for those with high housing burdens and sparse variance of those affected by high housing costs from 2010-2016.

1.a.5.: Estimated quantity of households with high housing cost burdens

![Graph showing the quantity of households with high housing cost burdens from 2010 to 2016 for King and Spokane County. The graph shows a near static rate of change for those with high housing burdens and sparse variance of those affected by high housing costs from 2010-2016.](graph.png)
1.a.6.: Estimated percentages of households with high housing cost burdens

B. Parents who lack necessary Education and/or Meaningful Employment

According to the U.S. Census’s report, between 2010 and 2018, 93-94% of heads of households had a high school diploma or equivalent in 2011 at minimum, (see U.S. Census Table S1702). The remaining 6-7% heads of households of those with less of a high school degree are detailed in 1.b.1 and 1.b.2.

1.b.1.: Estimated percentages of household-heads that possess less than high school diploma
1.b.2.: Number of household-heads that possess less than a high school diploma

Notice in Table 1.b.1 that Spokane County has been trending downward like King County, yet Spokane County has a more erratic progression of a downward trend than King County, for instance, between 2012-2015.

Whether or not a parent is currently employed can strongly affect a child’s behavior, health, development and growth. The U.S. Census Estimates tallies estimated quantities of families with children (defined as under 18-years-old) where no one has reported employment in the past 12 months (U.S. Census Table ID: 2S302). See graph 1.b.3. and 1.b.4.

Since 2010, Spokane families have seen a rise of families with children that did not report employment that peaked in 2013 and has consistently declined afterwards. Future data released after 2018 may reveal a reversal in this trend because of social distancing and some businesses closing in response to COVID-19.
1.b.3.: Estimated percentage of families with children that have not reported any employment in past 12 months (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2018)

1.b.4.: Estimated quantity of families with children that have not reported any employment in past 12 months
C. Teens not in School and not working

Notice the similar trends between tables 1.a.1 and 1.a.2. and 1.c.1. and 1.c.2. Though there is less of a similar pattern between children in living in poverty and teenagers not working and not enrolled in school than children living in poverty and families receiving supplemental services (tables 1.a.3. and 1.a.4). It is not improbable to suggest that many teenagers who decided to drop out of school become either unable and/or unwilling to join the labor force for a living wage and find themselves dependent on another’s income for support. For Spokane county the peak year for rates of such characteristics of teenagers was 2015. Future data may indicate that that rate has risen in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

1.c.1.: Estimated percentages of teenagers who are not employed and not enrolled in school
D. Foster Children

According to U.S. Census estimates, Spokane County’s rise of children who are characterized as foster children peaked per capita in 2015 before rates started declining. Note the similarities between rates of foster children with rates of teenagers who are not working and not enrolled in school (Tables 1.c.1, 1.c.2). For example, in Spokane County, the percentage of foster children and percentage of teenagers who were not employed and not enrolled in school is estimated to have peaked between 2014 and 2017 compared to lower rates of foster children and teenager not employed and not enrolled in school between 2011 and 2013.

1.d.1: Estimated percentages of foster children in occupied housing
1.d.2: Estimated number of foster children in occupied housing

Part 3: Health and Well-being

A. Low Birth Weights

The Washington Department of Health has set the parameters for below-average weight of newborns to below or at 2499 grams or below or at 5.5 pounds. There are numerous mental and physical risks associated with lower-than-average birth weights, from abnormal metabolism to lower lung capacity to higher risks of infection, which can continue from childhood to even adulthood. Preventing premature and low-weight births can drastically improve the overall health of future generations of children.

Tables 2.a.1. and 2.b.1. taken from data from the Washington State Department of Health shows that Spokane County has seen some rises in rates lower-than-average weight newborns, particularly between 2015 and 2016, though Spokane County’s rate of low-birth-weight newborns has been more consistent and less erratic than King County.
2.a.1: Percentage of newborns born under-weight

![Graph showing percentage of newborns born under-weight by county from 2010 to 2018.]

2.a.2: Quantity of newborns born under-weight

![Graph showing quantity of newborns born under-weight by county from 2010 to 2018.]

B. Children Without All Recommended Immunizations

The Washington State Department of Health has set the goal and expectation for at least 80% of young children to be immunized with the mandatory recommended series for their age group and 90% of young children to complete each individual vaccine component on time. For data and clarification on these requirements and the specific immunizations and vaccines, see the Data and Statistical Reports Dashboard on The Washington State Department of Health’s website [here](http://www.doh.wa.gov).
The individual parental decision to not immunize children can have lasting effects on not just a child’s health but also a child’s education and future special needs. Spokane County has had some successes in meeting the national and state immunization goals, but has not met these expectations during certain years, particularly 2012-2014, according to the Historical Immunization Coverage of Washington State (Washington State Department of Health, 2010-2018). There also has been a rise of “personal exceptions” listed in the Historical Immunization Coverage of Washington State as the reason certain children are not immunized once they start Kindergarten, as table 2.b.1 illustrates:

2.b.1.: Estimated percent of children who did not receive all CDC recommended immunizations by Kindergarten, according to the WA DOH:

Note that personal, medical, and religious exemptions for not immunizing children by the time they reach Kindergarten were not recorded by the Washington State Department of Health’s Historical Immunization data prior to 2012. Of all the listed exemptions between 2012-2018, “personal exemptions” claims have increased from 4.7 percent to 6.8 percent of the reasons for not immunizing children, as opposed to medical exemptions which at maximum are only approximately 1.9 percent of exemptions and .9 percent at minimum between 2012-2018.

C. Children without Health Insurance
The creation of the Affordable Health Care Act in 2010 has seen an increase of families receiving healthcare, resulting in more children have received healthcare since then. The U.S. Census Estimates reported (tableID S2701) that since 2012, Spokane and King County have increased enrollment of children in some form of health insurance coverage. Spokane County, unlike King County, has not had as much of an enrollment increase per capita, as tables 2.c.1. and 2.c.2. indicate.
D. Teen Pregnancy

One factor that can prepare children for a more successful life is the age and experience of the parent/s. A 15-19-year-old who raises a child can limit a child’s opportunities later in life as well as limit or at least complicate a parent’s chances of finding meaningful employment and/or education in addition to providing childcare. From 2010-2018, there has been little fluctuation of rates of teenage pregnancy in either Spokane or King Counties. Note that in table 2.d.1. that Spokane has seen an incremental rise of teenage pregnancy since 2012, whereas King County has seen an incremental decline.
2.d.1.: Percent of 15-19-Year-Old Female with a birth in the last 12 months

2.d.2.: Estimated number of 15-19-year-old female with a birth in the last 12 months

**AUTHOR’S NOTE ABOUT THE NEXT SECTION:**

In order to clarify, because child and teen deaths have had precipitous drop compared to previous decades, metrics of per 100,000 versus percentages are presented in the following reports for better context.
E. Child and Teen Suicides
2.e.1: Suicide Rates (Per 100,000), ages ranging from 10-19

Both King and Spokane counties share the risk of pre-teen and teenage suicides increasing with age. Spokane County has seen the highest rise of 15 to 19-year-olds committing suicide between 2013 and 2018, though it should be noted that these shifts can occur when simply more than one or two suicides occur in a year.

F. Child and Teen Homicide Deaths
2.f.1: Homicide rates (per 100,000), ages ranging from 5-19.
Spokane County has had the unique distinction of having a few child homicides, though not as many teenage homicides as King County.

G. Child and Teen Accidental Deaths

2.g.1.: Deaths caused by accidental injury (per 100,000), ages ranging from 5-19.

Risk for accidental injury deaths for both counties increase by the time a child enters his or her teenage years.

Washington State does not have mandatory Child Death Reviews as many states do. Were that the case, all child deaths would be reviewed to address issues of preventability.

NOTES ABOUT THE FOLLOWING DATA SETS:

The survey referenced in Table 2.h.1. and the following surveys involving tobacco (2.h.2.), painkillers (2.h.3.) alcohol (2.h.4), and bullying (2.h.5.), are from the Healthy Youth Survey, which takes a sample of student participants from 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade. The quantity of participants varies with the year. Details on how data is collected can be referenced here (Healthy Youth Survey, 2018).

In general, students’ choice to use controlled or illegal substances increases with age.
H. Youth and Teen Marijuana Use (Healthy Youth Survey, 2010-2018)

2.h.1.: 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students surveyed who report they currently use Marijuana products (at least once in the past month).

Marijuana, or marijuana-related products are substances that have recently been legalized by Washington for adults (age 21 and over) in Washington State, yet rates of youth use have not fluctuated as much as tobacco or prescription painkillers. The only slight fluctuation is 2012, which also is when Washington Initiative 502 legalizing Marijuana passed, coincidentally.

I. Youth and Teen Nicotine Use

While rates of smoking tobacco have incrementally decreased in youth use, Vaping and E-cigarettes have risen in popularity, particularly in Spokane County as opposed to King County as seen in comparing tables 2.i.1. (cigarettes) and 2.i.2. (E-cigs and vaping).
2.i.1. 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students surveyed who report they currently smoke cigarettes (at least once in the past month).

![Graph showing prevalence of cigarette smoking by grade and county over years.]

2.i.2. 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students surveyed who report they currently use E-cigs or vape Products (at least once in the past month).

![Graph showing prevalence of E-cigarette and vape use by grade and county over years.]

J. Youth and Teen Painkiller Use

Although the risk of young people deciding to use painkillers increases with their age, there has been a downward trend in use of such drugs (Table 2.j.1). There are further details about the variety of painkillers substances within the individual Healthy Youth Survey fact sheets.
2.j.1.: 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students surveyed who report they currently use a painkiller or prescription drug not intended for prescribed to recipient (at least once in the past month).

K. Youth and Teen Alcohol use
Similar to Marijuana use, teen and youth alcohol use tends to increase in age, and the number of teens who use alcohol has remained at similar rates in both counties. Although alcohol is not a controlled substance in the U.S., it is a substance which can play a hindering role in the physical and mental development and judgement of children and teens.

2.k.1.: 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students surveyed who report they currently use alcohol (at least once in the past month).
L. Youth and Teen Bullying

Bullying, defined by the HYS is the intentional, repeated, negative behavior on the part of an aggressor who targets a victim to address a perceived power imbalance of some kind. The HYS also mentions that all Washington schools are required, at a minimum, to implement state model policies and procedures that prohibit harassment, intimidation, and bullying, (Healthy Youth Survey, 2018).

Students who do feel intimidated or unsafe in their academic environment due to other students exhibiting bullying behavior tend to report lower grades compared to those students who feel more accepted.

Unlike other tables referencing the HYS in this report, students report bullying and harassment more evenly throughout their experience in K-12, until around the final years of high school when it starts to decrease.

2.1.1.: 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students surveyed who report they have experienced bullying.

![Diagram showing reports of bullying by grade and year.]

Part 3: Education

A. Children not receiving Early Childcare Education

Early pre-kindergarten childhood education in the U.S. is not mandatory public education and thus is arguably a resource more readily available to those families with more disposable income. Early childhood education can be an invaluable asset not only in ensuring positive childhood growth and development, but it also helps parents effectively micromanage time and resources.

As seen in Table 3.a.1., Spokane County, unlike King County, has not seen any significant trend in enrolling more children into early childhood education since 2015, the year where the least quantity and percentage of children were enrolled in early childcare. Referring to tables 1.a.1 – 1.a.2. on Children living below the poverty line, which have similar trend lines, suggests that widening and/or static income inequality resulting in the lack of affordability of early childhood education, coupled with the widening
pay-scale/education requirements ratio of early childhood educators and staff, may be an indicator of why early childhood education is not as used by families as in previous years.

3.a.1.: Percent of Children, Ages 4-5, who are not enrolled in either Public or Private education.

3.a.2.: Number of Children, Ages 4-5, who are not enrolled in either Public or Private education.

B. Kindergarten Readiness (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010-2018)

In order to assess the abilities and skills of students in Washington State, WaKids, the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing skills, (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.) provides an assessment during the first two months of Kindergarten. This assessment allows teachers to observe students’ social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math abilities. Table 3.b.1. includes the average success rate of all districts in both Spokane and King County.
3.b.1.: Average rate of students who passed WaKids standards.

Note that this assessment is relatively new and that the initial recipients were of smaller sets of kindergarteners than those tested now.

C. Assessment Scores for Math and English Language Skills

To address academic skills and performance among students at certain grade levels, this research for CIS references the English Language and Math assessments given to students in the Spring. These assessments are administered either by The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, n.d.) and are labeled as “General” in Table 3.c.1 or by WA-AIM (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.) and are labeled as “Alternate” in Table 3.c.1. WA-AIM, incentivized by The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), assesses children if they have “significant cognitive disabilities” as stated on their website (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.). Recently, a science assessment has been administered to Washington State Students since 2017-2018 but was not included in this report. Three years of data of science testing is required before publication by the OSPI Report Card, which is the resource cited in this research for CIS.

Table 3.c.1. combines all the school districts’ averages of students who met the criteria (Level 3 or 4 scores, as opposed to Level 1 or 2). Note that while King County students tend to score higher in the general assessments administered by the SBAC, whereas Spokane County leads in assessment administered by WA-AIM.
3.c.1.: Average passing rates for Math and English Language Assessments by SBAC or WA-AIM

3.d.1.: Average rate of first-time students prepared for the 9th Grade

D. Ninth Grade Readiness

One way to consider if children are prepared for high school and beyond is to assess if first-time 9th Graders have passed all attempted credits, not including withdrawals. Table 3.d.1. averages the King and Spokane County districts’ average quantity of students who passed this requirement criteria. NOTE: Both counties reported almost identical average percentage rates of Ninth Grade readiness in King and Spokane County, with the exception of the 2018/2019 school year. The data for King county between 2014-2018 isn’t missing, it just the almost same as Spokane’s.
Both Spokane and King County generally possess between 77-80% students prepared for 9th Grade, leaving around a remaining 20-23% that need attention and/or help with meeting the standards of high school curriculums.

E. English Language Readiness

According to the American Immigration Council (American Immigration Council, 2020), about one in seven Washington State residents is either an immigrant or native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent.

Although American English is not the official language of the U.S., learning and understanding English as a second-language can have a variety of benefits in education, labor, and so forth, especially for children who were born to immigrant parents or foreign-born.

To accommodate and immerse students from non-English-speaking backgrounds into learning English, the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) tests students’ ability to speak, listen, read, and write English annually. If a student is proficient in the four aforementioned abilities in English they may leave such services. A student is “progressing,” as Table 3.e.1. shows, if they are on track to leave these English learning services within six years (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2020).

3.e.1.: Average of combined King and Spokane County district averages of ELPA21 students who met English standards and those progressing (on track to leave ELPA21 within six years).

Spokane County and King County have similar rates of students’ progression of learning English, though neither counties have managed accommodate the majority of target students who require learning English in order to meet academic expectations.

Discipline and Exclusion Days

The discipline rate is derived from the quantity of distinct students who have received out-of-school exclusionary actions (varying degrees of suspensions and expulsions) divided by the distinct students
enrolled. Note that this measure counts individual students and not the amount of times a student is cited for a disciplinary action. A student who commits more than one disciplinary action is counted only once (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010-2018). This research for CIS, as displayed in tables 3.f.1 is the combined total discipline rate percentages of King and Spokane county districts averaged.

3.f.1.: Average discipline rate.

To break down the average number of exclusion days a distinct student has given within the aforementioned discipline rate, see 3.f.2. for further details.

3.f.2.: Average length of time students are excluded for disciplinary actions.
G. Attendance (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010-2018)
According to the OSPI, a K-12 student who does not exhibit regular attendance must possess more than two excused or unexcused absences per month. Referencing the Washington OSPI’s report card data, the combined attendance rates of the Spokane and King County school districts are averaged.

3.g.1.: Average K-12 student regular attendance

H. Graduation
The OSPI quantify students’ overall progress in high school through three categories: (1) all students who made graduation requirements in four years or less since 9th Grade (see table 3.h.1.); (2) those students who take longer to graduate than four years which are continuing students; and (3) those who do not continue who are defined as drop-outs (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010-2018). Referencing the Washington OSPI’s report card data, the combined graduation rates as described in the 1st category of the Spokane and King County school districts are averaged.

3.h.1.: Average rate of high school students who have met graduation requirements.
About the author:
Nicholas Pace is a volunteer for Communities In Schools living in Spokane, WA. He currently works for Engie Insight as a data processor.

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