

Child Trends in Minnesota

This module explores indicators of child well being in Minnesota using county-level data.

1. Begin by going to the KIDS COUNT web site (<http://www.kidscount.org>) and click on “Kids Count Data Book Online” and click on the state profile for Minnesota.
 - Examine the indicators of child well-being for Minnesota (1999) and compare to the National figures.
 - Write a few sentences summarizing the differences between Minnesota and the nation.

2. Open the excel file Trend_Tool.xls
 - Using the pull down menu choose infant mortality as the indicator and the United states as the geographic area.
 - In the next row choose infant mortality as the indicator and Minnesota as the geographic area.
 - a. Examine both trends over time. Did the trend increase, decrease or stay the same?

 - b. How does Minnesota compare to the United States?

3. Choose a trend you find interesting.
 - Using the pull down menu choose this trend as the indicator and Minnesota as the geographic area.
 - In the next row choose the same trend. For the geographic area, chose a state that you believe is very dissimilar from Minnesota
 - a. Examine both trends over time. Did the trend increase, decrease or stay the same?

 - b. How does Minnesota compare to (Insert state name here)?

4. Durkheim highlighted the importance of social integration. Persons with connections to the community are thought to be less likely to commit crimes. Geographic mobility, or moving around from place to place can interfere with social integration.
 - a. Using “Children Changing Schools” (Percent of children who changed schools within or outside their district in a given year) and “Children arrested for serious crimes” to represent mobility and crime respectively, write a hypothesis stating the relationship you predict between mobility and crime.
 - b. To test this relationship, open the excel file “tool_mn.xls”.
 - Make a scatter plot by using the pull down menu
 - Let x be “Children changing schools” 2000 and y be “Children arrested for serious crimes 2000.
 - Cut and paste plot into a Word file and record the correlation coefficient.
 - c. Write an interpretation of the correlation coefficient summarizing the relationship between mobility and crime. Click on the FAQ tab on the Excel spreadsheet for assistance with interpreting correlation coefficients. Pay attention to both strength and direction of the relationship.
 - d. Was your hypothesis confirmed? Explain your answer.
 - e. The x variable is plotted along the horizontal axis and the y along the vertical axis. Find the two counties with the highest x value and record below. Since x is plotted along the horizontal, values furthest to the right will have the

higher value. Placing your mouse over the data point will reveal the county and values of both x and y. Another alternative is to click on the rank tab on the excel spreadsheet.

Minnesota County	Value of x (Changing schools)

- f. Find the two counties with the highest y value and record below. Since y is plotted along the vertical, values closest to the top of the chart will have the higher value.

Minnesota County	Value of y (Children arrested)

- g. Read the profiles of these four counties by going to the Minnesota KIDS COUNT affiliate (Children Defense Fund – Minnesota) <http://www.cdf-mn.org/kidscount.html>. (Need Adobe Acrobat Reader to access).

- h. What factors might explain why these two counties have high values for the changing schools variable?

- i. What factors might explain why these two counties have high values for the children arrested for serious crimes variable?

- j. Choose a Minnesota county you have an interest in and take a look at its profile. In a few sentences describe how children fare in this county according to the KIDS COUNT indicators.

5. Repeat this analysis using “Children in out of home placements” as the new y variable.
 - a. Choose a variable you think might cause a higher proportion of children not living with their parents but in a group home, foster care, emergency shelters, or placed with other relatives.
 - b. Write a hypothesis stating the relationship you predict between “Children in out of home placement” and your chosen x variable.
 - c. Test your hypothesis
 - Make a scatter plot by using the pull down menu
 - Let x be “insert your variable here” 1998 and y be “Children in out of home placement” 1998
 - Cut and paste plot into a Word file and record the correlation coefficient.
 - d. Write an interpretation of the correlation coefficient summarizing the relationship. Click on the FAQ tab on the Excel spreadsheet for assistance with interpreting correlation coefficients. Pay attention to both strength and direction of the relationship.
 - e. Was your hypothesis confirmed? Explain your answer.