

A Portrait of
children
in Northern Virginia **2010**



AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PRESENTED BY THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND VOICES FOR VIRGINIA'S CHILDREN

During FY 2010,
The Community
Foundation will award

\$4 million

in grants to nonprofits,
interfaith groups,
and schools.

About The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia works to grow philanthropy to help meet the most critical needs of our community. Founded in 1978, the Community Foundation grows funds for charitable giving in our region. We are an independent, community based foundation that develops grant making funds from the community, for the community.

During FY 2010, the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia will award \$4 million in grants to nonprofits, interfaith groups, and schools; award \$130,000 in scholarships; and report approximately \$30 million in managed assets.

Our knowledge of the Northern Virginia area is what sets us apart from other community based nonprofits. In addition to grant making, we continuously look at important and innovative ways to add value to our community. We are uniquely positioned to take a leadership role in helping to identify community needs and to guide community action to meet those needs.

You can learn more about the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia and how to support our work at www.communityfoundationnova.org.

About Voices for Virginia's Children

Voices for Virginia's Children is a statewide, non-partisan research and advocacy organization that champions public policies to improve the lives of Virginia's children. We are the independent voice advocating for children, especially those who are disadvantaged or otherwise vulnerable and who often go unheard in the public policy arena. Using our Kids Count system, we track multiple indicators of the well-being of Virginia's children and use that information to identify unmet needs and guide policy recommendations. Through independent, non-partisan research, data-based policy solutions and vigorous advocacy, we inspire Virginia's leaders and citizens to make children a higher public policy priority.

We hope this Portrait of Children in Northern Virginia will inspire the region's leaders to make policy choices that improve the lives of children. Such policy choices promote broad, longer-term system changes that strengthen communities and the organizations directly serving our children and families, ultimately benefiting thousands of children.

You can learn more about Voices and how to support our work at www.vakids.org.

Through independent,
non-partisan research,
data-based policy
solutions and vigorous
advocacy,
we inspire Virginia's leaders
and citizens to make children
a higher public policy priority.

A Resource for Knowledge and Strategic Giving

Every hope for the future depends on a community's capacity to meet the needs of its children. Children need nutritious food, shelter from the elements, access to healthcare, a sound education and a loving family. With these basic needs in place, every child in Northern Virginia has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia and Voices for Virginia's Children are pleased to present "A Portrait of Children in Northern Virginia," a first-ever snapshot of the status of Northern Virginia's children. The research for this Portrait was assiduously performed by Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia, and special thanks go to Dean Montgomery and his staff.


The report highlights demographic, economic, and social trends that impact children and youth ages 0-18 in Northern Virginia. It includes the most current available data from the U.S. Census Reports, American Community Survey, Virginia Vital Statistics, the Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data, and other sources. The full report can be downloaded from either www.communityfoundationnova.org or www.vakids.org/work/northernva.htm.

While we are fortunate to live in an area that is highly educated and that ranks high on most standard indicators of well-being, there are a number of areas where concern and attention are warranted. As the report demonstrates, significant socio-economic differences exist between, and even within, Northern Virginia jurisdictions. Some of the most serious issues children, youth and families face are especially concentrated in specific geographic areas, or "pockets of poverty." These pockets are where low income families, larger numbers of dropouts, larger numbers of expectant mothers who do not obtain adequate prenatal care, and higher percentages of low birth weight infants are concentrated. Consequently, youth in these pockets are at higher-than-average risk for the development of child and adolescent problems.

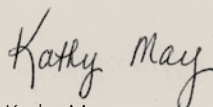
The latest data available on most indicators reviewed for this report does not reflect the full impact of the recession, which began in late 2007. Figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau in September 2009 show a substantial increase in child poverty in Virginia during 2008. As the effects of the recession and the persistently high unemployment rate continue to build, it is likely that significantly more children in the region will fall into poverty over the next two years. The 2010 census data will help to reveal the full magnitude of the economic downturn's impact on our children.

We trust that the data offered here will inform and inspire you, lead to a meaningful dialogue about the real needs of our children, grow philanthropic and public investments to meet those needs, and encourage all of us to help improve the lives of our region's children.

Sincerely,



Eileen Ellsworth
President
Community Foundation for Northern Virginia



Kathy May
Director, Northern Virginia Initiative
Voices for Virginia's Children

DEMOGRAPHY: POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS



More than

530,000

children ages 0-18 live
in Northern Virginia.

After a decade of population shifts, the outer suburbs are younger and more diverse

Northern Virginia is home to more than 2,000,000 residents. This is about 30% of Virginia's total population. In 2008, 530,000 children, or one-fourth of Northern Virginia's total population, were under the age of 18. One in four of Virginia children under the age of 18 live in Northern Virginia.

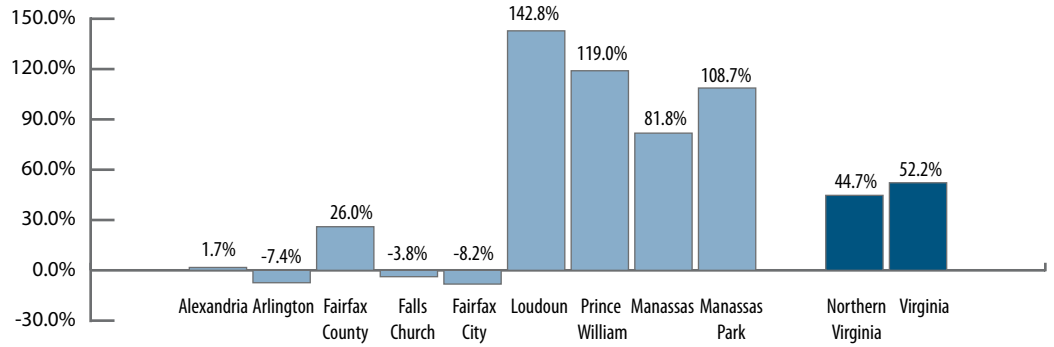
More than one-third of the children in Northern Virginia reside in Loudoun and Prince William Counties.

Decades ago, residential growth was centered in the inner-ring suburbs of Northern Virginia and later in Fairfax County. In contrast, during the decade ending in 2010, 75% of the net population increase has been along the outer-rim in Prince William and Loudoun counties and in Manassas and Manassas Park.

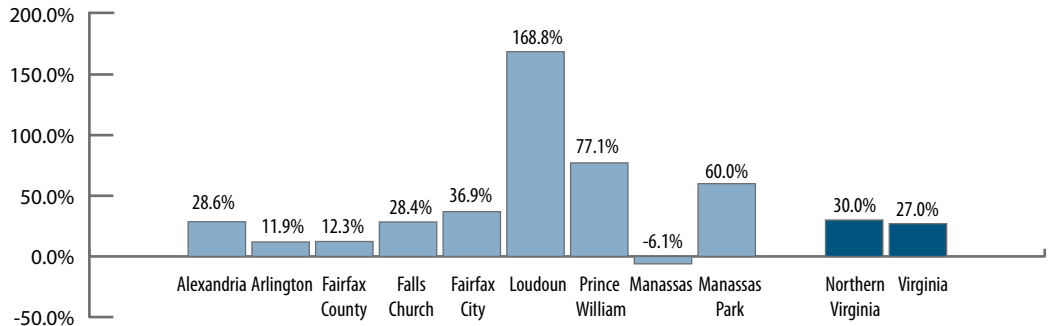
The most dramatic change in Northern Virginia's demography is the rapidly growing number of immigrants and minorities, particularly in the outer suburbs.

These demographic trends affect the need for education, health care, and affordable housing. They also test the ability of our region to meet the needs of all of its children.

Population Change
Hispanic Residents 0-17,
 2001-2007
 Source: U.S. Census, 2001-2007



Population Change
Asian Residents 0-17,
 2001-2007
 Source: U.S. Census, 2001-2007

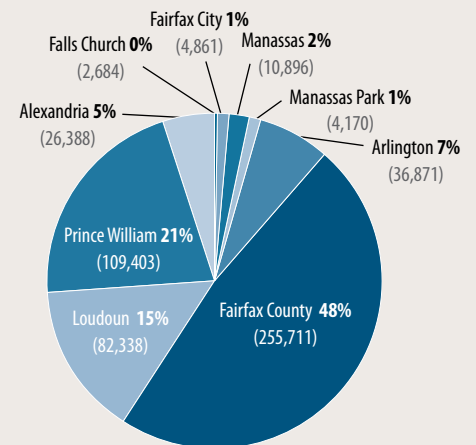


The Facts

- Northern Virginia’s population under 18 years of age has nearly doubled since 1980 to more than 530,000 children and youth.
- 36% of children in Northern Virginia under 18 years of age now reside in Loudoun County and Prince William County.
- Minority populations are present in substantial numbers in all Northern Virginia jurisdictions, but are more highly concentrated along the Route 1 corridor in the eastern part of the region, in the Bailey’s Crossroads area of Fairfax County, in the greater Manassas/Manassas Park area of western Prince William County, and in the Herndon-Sterling area of western Fairfax County and eastern Loudoun County.
- School populations throughout Northern Virginia are highly diverse. Only two of the region’s school systems, Loudoun County and the City of Falls Church, have a majority White non-Hispanic population. Minority populations combined make up the majority of the school population in all other school systems.
- Racial and ethnic diversity in Northern Virginia continues to increase. Between 2001 and 2007, the Hispanic population under 18 years of age grew by nearly 45% from approximately 68,000 to more than 98,000. During the same period, the Asian population under 18 years of age grew by more than 30%, from approximately 51,000 to nearly 67,000.

Distribution of Children and Youth
in Northern Virginia Communities

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of VA, 2009



Percentage of Population <18 Years of Age, 2008

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Deep pockets of poverty exist across the Northern Virginia region

By most measures, Northern Virginia is relatively affluent and is known for its economic vitality and strength. Because of this, many children in the region benefit from a wide array of resources and supports. But in each jurisdiction, wide income disparities between the wealthiest and poorest residents exist. Significant pockets of poverty and disadvantage are present even in the wealthier communities.

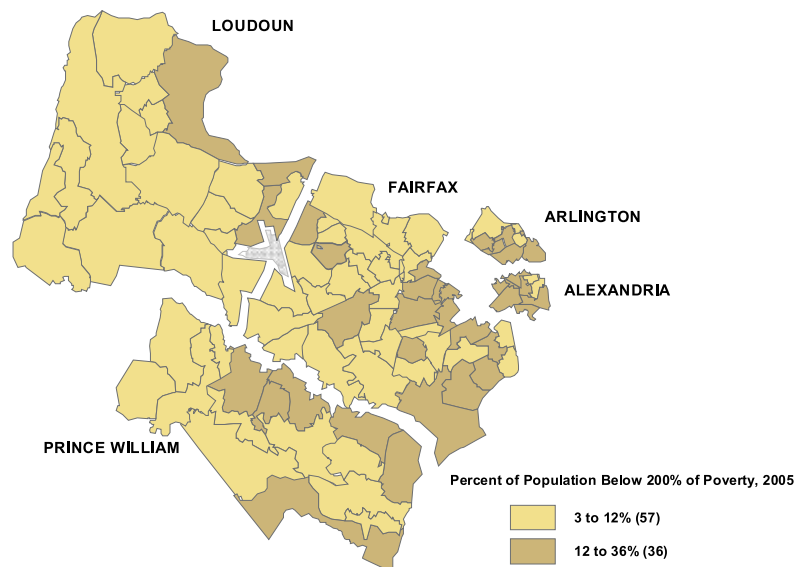
The deepest pockets of poverty in Northern Virginia can be found along the Route 1 corridor in the eastern part of the region, in the Bailey's Crossroads area of Fairfax County, in the greater Manassas/Manassas Park area of western Prince William County, and in the Herndon-Sterling area of western Fairfax County and eastern Loudoun County.

Living in poverty can significantly compromise a child's development. Children in poor families have worse health and educational outcomes and are more likely to experience violent crime compared to children growing up in more-affluent families. For many children, poverty persists into adolescence and adulthood, and is associated with a greater risk of dropping out of school, teen childbearing and lower earnings for young adults.

Federal poverty guidelines are a standard measure of family and community economic hardship. There is general agreement that, in most communities, families need an income of about twice the Federal Poverty Level (about \$44,000 per year for a family of four in 2009) to cover basic necessities. The poverty level does not take into account the cost of living in a specific community. The high cost of living in Northern Virginia means that many additional families here struggle to make ends meet.

Percentage of the Population Living Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level in Northern Virginia

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2005-2007



The Facts

- A substantial number of children in Northern Virginia live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), defined as \$22,050 for a family of four in 2009. In 2005 – 2007 the percentage of families with children under 18 years of age with incomes below the FPL ranges from less than 2% in Loudoun County to nearly 18% in Manassas. In total, more than 30,000 children in Northern Virginia live in poverty.
- Specific communities in the region have large concentrations of children living in poverty. Families with low and poverty-level incomes are concentrated in the areas shown on the map on page 4. The children and youth in these families are at higher-than-average risk for the development of child and adolescent problems.
- More than 76,000 students in the region participate in the Free or Reduced Price School Lunch Program. To qualify for the program, students must live in families that earn approximately \$40,000 annually (for a family of four). Program participation levels are therefore a useful tool for estimating school district level poverty.
- Participation levels in the Free or Reduced Price School Lunch Program vary widely within the region, ranging from a low of 6% in the City of Falls Church to more than 50% in Alexandria.

More than 30,000 children in Northern Virginia live below the Federal Poverty Level.

More than

76,000

students participate in Free or Reduced Price School Lunch Program.



Children in immigrant families are a rapidly growing segment of our population

Children in immigrant families, defined as people under age 18 who are foreign born or who live with at least one foreign-born parent, are a rapidly growing segment of Northern Virginia's population. Between 2005 and 2007, approximately 43% of Northern Virginia's children lived in immigrant families. This is more than twice the state and national rates. The vast majority of children in immigrant families are citizens born in the United States to foreign-born parents.

Immigrant families bring many benefits to our communities, including stable healthy families, a strong work ethic, a youthful population, and cohesive communities. Many immigrant families are thriving and contributing to the vitality of the region. But overall, immigrant families are more likely to be low-income.

For children in immigrant families, parents' English language ability is an important factor in their overall well-being and their chance for success. These children and their families may experience barriers in communicating with health and other service providers. They may spend more time mastering English skills in school, potentially putting them behind in other learning. The language barrier may also make it more difficult for immigrant parents to be involved in community activities and to obtain available food, health, mental health and housing assistance when it is needed.

Approximately

43%

of Northern Virginia
children live in
immigrant families.



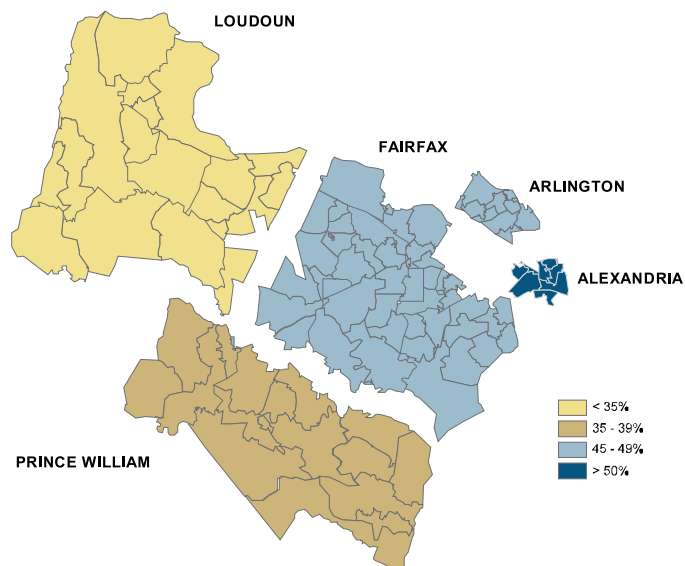
The Facts

- The percentage of children in immigrant families in Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax County is higher than the regional average. However, Loudoun and Prince William Counties are catching up. Between 2001 and 2007 the Hispanic population under 18 years of age increased by more than 100% in Loudoun and Prince William counties. The Asian population under 18 years of age increased by more than 100% in Loudoun and more than 75% in Prince William County.
- More than 50% of the 30,000 children living in poverty in Northern Virginia are children in immigrant families.
- The U.S. Census Bureau considers a “linguistically isolated” household as one in which all members of the family ages 14 and up have difficulty speaking and understanding English. All Northern Virginia jurisdictions have substantially higher percentages of linguistically isolated households than are found statewide or nationally. Percentages range from a low of 4.8% of households in Loudoun County to 12% of households in Manassas City.
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) among Northern Virginia public school students is much higher than statewide and nationally. The number of students not proficient in English increased substantially in all local jurisdictions during the last decade. In 2008 there were more than 62,000 students with limited English proficiency in the region.

More than 62,000 students in Northern Virginia have limited English proficiency.

Distribution of Children Living in Immigrant Families by County in Northern Virginia, 2005-2007

Map source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2005-2007



Approximately

90%

of adults in
Northern Virginia
have completed
high school.



In a highly educated region, there are disparities in high school drop out rates

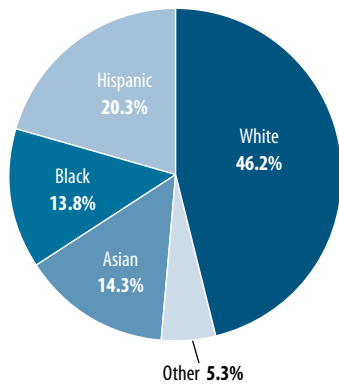
As with health status, education levels are correlated with personal and community well-being. Higher educational attainment is usually indicative of higher social status, higher income, and superior health status. Children of well educated, affluent adults and families tend to be healthier and at considerably less personal and social risk.

Northern Virginia is known for high performing school systems. Most elementary students in the region have made measurable progress in the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment program. In most Northern Virginia jurisdictions, the percentage of students passing SOL examinations is higher than the passing rate statewide. Substantially higher numbers of third grade students passed standardized exams in 2006 than in 2000.

Average Northern Virginia high school dropout rates are lower than those seen nationally and statewide, and on time graduation rates are higher than the national rates. However, disparities exist among various population groups. For example, a disproportionate number of Hispanic and Black high school students in Northern Virginia drop out each year.

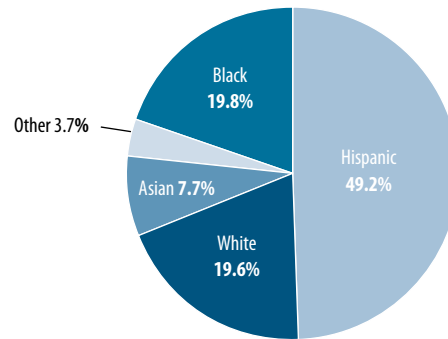
School Enrollment by Race & Ethnicity, Northern Virginia, 2009-10

Source: Virginia Department of Education, 2009



School Dropouts by Race & Ethnicity, Northern Virginia, 2007-2008

Source: Virginia Department of Education, 2010



The Facts

- Education levels in Northern Virginia are high. More than 55% of adults in Northern Virginia have college degrees, about twice the national percentage.
- Approximately 90% of adults in all jurisdictions have completed high school.
- Parental education is a strong indicator of the likelihood that a child will experience poverty. In 2007 about 43% of Virginia children of parents without high school degrees lived in poor families. This compares with 12% of children whose parents graduated from high school and 6% of children whose parents had some college education.
- Overall, 8.3% of students in the State of Virginia drop out of high school. Four Northern Virginia jurisdictions exceed the statewide rate, including the City of Alexandria (10.6%), Arlington County (9.4%), Manassas City (14.8%), and Prince William County (9.4%).
- High school dropout rates in Northern Virginia are disproportionately high among Hispanic and Black high school populations. Region-wide, nearly half of all dropouts are Hispanic and about one-fifth of all dropouts are Black.

Region-wide, nearly half of all dropouts are Hispanic and about one-fifth of all dropouts are Black.

Maternal and infant health indicators turned negative in the last decade

The health and well-being of mothers, infants, and young children are of critical importance, both as reflections of the current health status of the region and as predictors of the health of the next generation.

Several maternal and child health indices in the region have turned negative. In particular, the number and percentage of pregnant women not obtaining timely prenatal care, the number and percentage of births to unmarried parents, and the infant mortality rate increased region wide during the last decade.

Infant mortality rates
in Northern Virginia
increased by more than
20%
between 2000 and 2007.

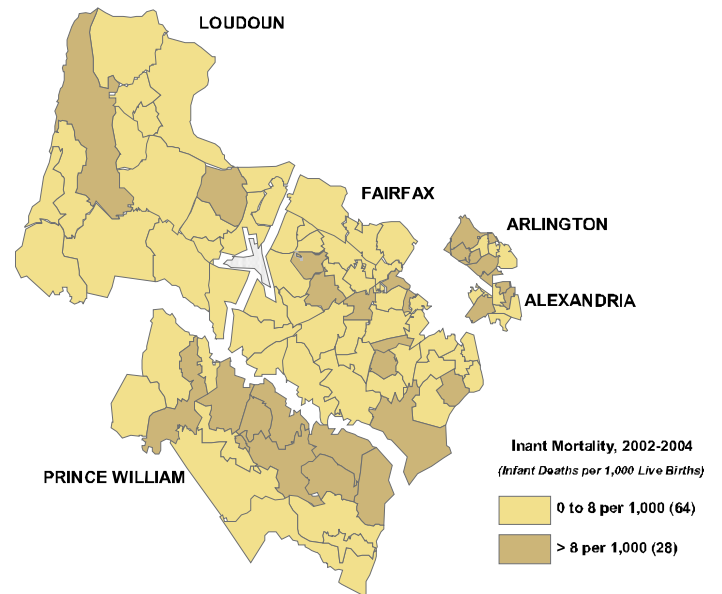


The Facts

- Prenatal care levels in Northern Virginia have consistently been below statewide levels since 2000. Women who obtain prenatal care (ideally in the first 13 weeks of pregnancy) have healthier babies, fewer premature deliveries, and fewer serious health problems related to the pregnancy.
- Approximately 25% of all births in Northern Virginia are to unmarried parents. Non-marital births are at higher risk of being low birth weight and/or preterm. Children born to unmarried parents usually have less of the social and financial support conducive to healthy development.
- There has been a region-wide increase in the infant mortality rate since 2000. With this increase, some jurisdictions now have infant mortality rates higher than the national average. Between 2000 and 2007, the regional infant mortality rate increased by more than 20%.
- During 2007, the Black infant mortality rate in Northern Virginia, 10.9 deaths per 1,000 live births, was about twice the rate for Whites, 5.5 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Infant Mortality Rates Across Northern Virginia

Source: Virginia Center for Health Statistics,
Virginia Department of Health, 2007-2008



Approximately
25%
of all births in
Northern Virginia
are to unmarried
parents.

Our children and youth face additional behavioral and environmental risks

Adolescents are more likely to engage in behaviors that threaten their health and safety. Some risky behaviors measured in this report include the numbers of adolescent accidental deaths, teen pregnancy rates, teen suicide rates, and teen involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Children and youth that experience abuse, are involved in the foster care system, or have disabilities are also at increased risk.

Child suicide rates in Northern Virginia are less than half the statewide rate.

The Facts

- The accidental death rate for children in Northern Virginia under the age of 18, 10.5 deaths per 100,000, is lower than the Virginia rate, 13 deaths per 100,000, and the national rate of 15 deaths per 100,000.
- Motor vehicle accidents account for about 60% of accidental deaths among youth under 19 years of age in Northern Virginia. Accidental death rates are much higher in Alexandria and Prince William County than elsewhere and much higher among males than females. The overall rate of death by motor vehicle accidents for children under 19 in Northern Virginia, 8.9 deaths per 1,000, is half the national rate, 17.8 deaths per 1,000.
- Teenage pregnancy rates vary widely within the region. The rates in Alexandria and Prince William County are higher than elsewhere in the region. The social consequences of teenage births are daunting and difficult to resolve. Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of school than those who delay childbearing. Only about 40% of teenagers who have children before age 18 finish high school, compared with 75% for those who do not give birth before age 20.
- The frequency of self-inflicted injury and suicide in Northern Virginia is much lower than the national or statewide rates. Between 1996 and 2005, the average suicide rate among Northern Virginia residents 10 to 24 years of age was 5.5 deaths per 100,000, less than half the statewide rate of 11.7 deaths per 100,000.
- Region-wide, about 12,500 children between the ages of 5 and 15 have one or more disabilities. Mental disabilities account for more than half of the total.

Approximately

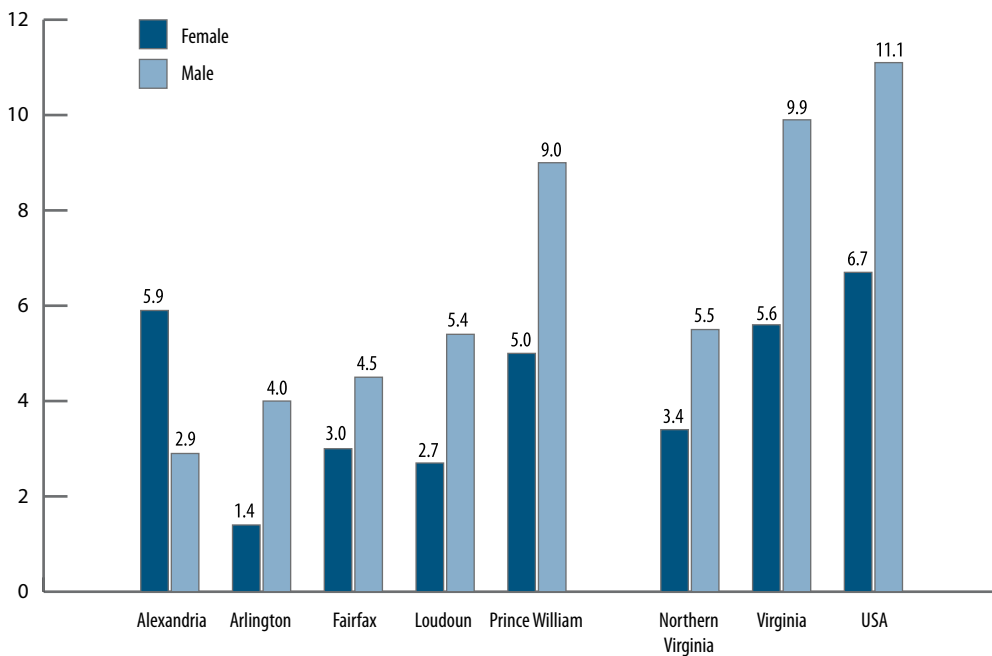
12,500

children in Northern Virginia have one or more physical or mental disabilities.



Accidental Deaths (Motor Vehicle) per 100,000 Children Under the Age of 19

Source: Compressed Mortality File 1999-2006. CDC WONDER On-line Database, 2009



The rate of death by motor vehicle accidents for children under the age of 19 in Northern Virginia is half the national rate.

For the complete report, including data tables and citations,
go to www.communityfoundationnova.org and www.vakids.org



8283 Greensboro Drive
McLean, VA 22102
703.902.2600
www.communityfoundationnova.org



4031 University Drive, Suite 200
Fairfax, VA 22030
703.277.7748
www.vakids.org