

# Children First releases Data Book 2008

The current recession has driven up Oregon's unemployment rate and pushed many families into poverty, according to the annual County Data Book 2008 recently released by Children First for Oregon. Children First's report shows that more children are living in financially unstable homes, many of them without access to basic necessities like health care.

"Oregon families need real help and they need it now," said Robin Christian, Executive Director of Children First for Oregon. "We cannot allow the current economic crisis to compound the issues our children are facing."

Statewide, over 140,000 children live below the federal poverty line (\$20,650 for a family of four in 2007); 110,000 children are without health coverage; well over 200,000 families receive food stamps, an 11 percent increase over the previous year, and 34,512 families receive assistance through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, an eight percent increase over last year.

The organization is calling on elected leaders to pass two programs critical to families: expanded health coverage for children, and employee-funded paid family leave. In a session with deep budget cuts planned, Children First also calls for the protection of critical human services, like Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

(TANF) and Employment Related Day Care (ERDC).

"The Legislature must do something to help struggling families right now and at the top of their list should be making sure every child has health coverage," said Cathy Kaufmann, Policy & Communications Director for Children First. "Not only will this help families and protect the health of our kids – it will also draw down millions of dollars in federal matching money at a time when the state economy sorely needs it."

This year's Data Book also continues Children First's commitment to providing the most current data on the well-being of Oregon's children and their families:

### Family Finances and Stability

- \$58,700 is the median family income, five percent lower than the national median.

- 336,019 children live in low-income households (200 percent of the federal poverty level, or \$41,300 for a family of four in 2007).

- Unemployment claims increased 58 percent between November 2007 and November 2008.

- Subprime loans make up 25.4 percent of loans in Oregon.

- 34,512 families receive cash assistance through the TANF program.

- 19,870 families receive child care subsidies through the ERDC program.

### Child Health

- 110,571 children (12.6 percent) have no health insurance.

- There are 3,048 students for every 1.0 FTE school nurse in Oregon. The preferred ratio is 750 students to 1.0 FTE nurse.

- 78.4 percent of mothers received adequate prenatal care.

### Child Welfare

- 10,716 children were victims of child abuse/neglect (12.2 per 1,000 children).

- 15,060 children have been in foster care at least once during the past year.

- 63,504 reports of child abuse/neglect were made in 2007. 42 percent of these reports were assessed, and 12 percent were founded.

Children First works to make Oregon a place where all children thrive. We educate and engage Oregonians to promote programs and policies that get results for kids. KIDS COUNT is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization that funds a nationwide network of projects that support disadvantaged children and families, [www.cffo.org](http://www.cffo.org).

# Feb. is Pet Dental Health month

You wouldn't go your whole life without brushing your teeth...and neither should your pet!

February is National Pet Dental Health month. Oregon veterinarians are reminding pet owners that oral disease is the most frequently diagnosed health problem affecting adult dogs and cats. Nearly 80 percent of all dogs and cats over the age of three have periodontal (gum) disease. Without prevention and treatment, this can lead to tooth decay, bleeding gums, tooth loss, and even damage to internal organs.

Check your pets for these symptoms of oral disease:

- Persistent bad breath
- Red, bleeding, swollen, receding or eroding gums
- Yellow-brown plaque or tartar on the teeth
- Loose, infected or missing teeth

Prevention and treatment options include dental cleanings by your veterinarian, brushing your pet's teeth regularly, and feeding your pet a specially formulated food to combat tartar and plaque buildup.

You can help your pet avoid periodontal disease by follow-

ing this 3-step prevention program:

1. Take your pet to your veterinarian for a dental examination. Don't wait for its next checkup if you suspect a problem. Your veterinarian may recommend regular cleanings.

2. Begin a dental care regimen that includes regular brushing and a nutritious diet. Ask your veterinarian to show you how to brush your pet's teeth.

3. Schedule regular veterinary checkups – twice a year is best, especially for older pets. These are essential in helping your veterinarian monitor your pet's dental – and physical – health.

Please see page 20

## CHS schedules a rabies clinic

The Columbia Humane Society will hold their first Rabies clinic of 2009 on February 7, from noon to 3:00 p.m., at the shelter, 2084 Oregon St., St. Helens.

For more information see their website: [www.columbiahumane.org](http://www.columbiahumane.org) or call 503-397-4353.

## Parents: You can control sibling rivalry

by the American Counseling Association

Having more than one child in your family almost guarantees disagreements, arguments and competition between the kids, at least sometimes. Your children may love one another, but disagreements between siblings still happen and still drive most parents crazy.

It's called "sibling rivalry" and its roots are probably buried in our prehistoric ancestors when surviving often meant you had to be number one in your parents' eyes. Today, actual survival isn't the issue, but staying number one in the parents' minds still is.

Young children often feel threatened when a sibling is born. They see parental love as limited and finite, but suddenly there's someone new to love, meaning less love for the older child.

It's not an irrational fear. A

new baby is usually the center of attention and, out of necessity, takes up more of the parents' time. The older child probably feels he or she is suddenly less important and probably starts to misbehave to win back more attention.

The cure for that problem is to demonstrate to your children that you love them all. Simply saying it has no real affect. But when you set aside some "special time" for the older child, offer your unfocused attention, and give plenty of hugs and reassurances, you're demonstrating your love and overcoming that sense of feeling threatened.

As children get older, it stops being jealousy over parental love, and is replaced by competition for parental attention. Siblings may compete to have better grades, be better in sports, or demonstrate better musical or artistic skills.

That's often a good thing, leading to higher levels of ac-

complishment, if kept under control. While you want to praise a higher-achieving child, this shouldn't be at the expense of siblings. If one child is always "winning," you may want to tip the scales slightly and give the other child extra attention and time.

But competition can get out of hand, threatening family peace and harmony, and possibly doing physical or emotional harm to one or the other child. That's when help is needed.

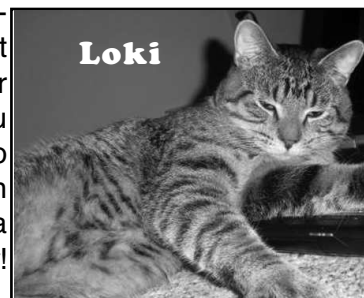
School counselors are often excellent sources of advice on excessive levels of sibling rivalry. A counseling professional specializing in children and families could also help.

While a little friendly sibling competition can sometimes be a good motivator, don't let it destroy family peace and happiness. As a parent, if you work to be fair with your love and attention, you may find sibling rivalry can disappear.

## Pet of the Month

Columbia Humane Society in St. Helens has a variety of wonderful pets available for adoption. Find the pet that's right for you in the shelter at 2084 Oregon Street. Phone 503-397-4353  
Open Mon - Fri 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 11 am. to 5 pm.

Loki is a very cute Manx mix kitty with no tail. Loki is a people's cat, he likes to be a part of whatever you do. He enjoys being on your lap and belly rubs. He has a playful side as well and has a blast chasing kitty toys. He will answer you in his kitty language when you talk to him. He is just such a joy to be around. Loki gets along with cats and dogs, and would be a great addition to your loving family!



Loki

The Columbia Humane Society is a No-Kill non-profit shelter dedicated to helping friends find each other since 1985.

This Adopt a Pet is Sponsored by:

**Senator Betsy Johnson**