

# SUMMARY RESULTS

## CHILDREN'S ISSUES BENCHMARK SURVEY

CONDUCTED JANUARY 9-11, 2006 FOR THE JACKSONVILLE KIDS COALITION

SUBMITTED FEBRUARY 27, 2006



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### **Methodology Review:**

Six hundred (420) interviews of self-described likely voters in Duval County Florida were conducted during the period of January 9<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> 2006. These interviews were stratified geographically at the precinct level by turnout in a general election and were conducted on a client-blind basis.

This research has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.9\%$  with a 95% confidence level.

### **Key Issues:**

Stated briefly, there are assumed to be four primary issues:

1. What priority do citizens of Duval County hold for the status of and services to children?
2. How do citizens think the community is doing with respect to the state of children?
3. What issue perspectives do Duval County citizens have regarding children in the community?
4. How can these priorities and perspectives be used to tool more effective communication by members of the coalition?

### **General Priorities:**

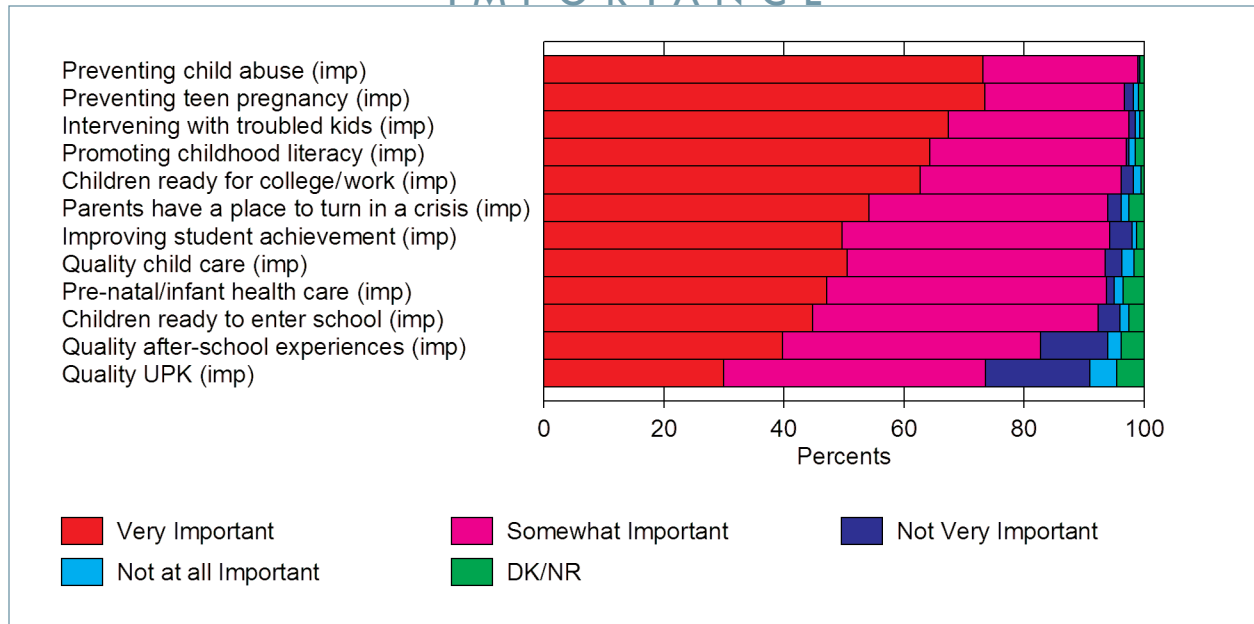
The dominant issue orientation for voters is public education, followed by “helping families and children.”

- 51% Improving public education
- 24% Help families and children
- 10% Senior citizens
- 9% Holding local taxes
- 7% Roads and transportation
- 5% More police officers

## Children's Services - Importance

As the chart and table below show the relative importance of various aspects of needs of children.

### IMPORTANCE



Importance	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not at all Important	DK/NR
Preventing child abuse	73%	26%	0%	0%	1%
Preventing teen pregnancy	73%	23%	1%	1%	1%
Intervening with troubled kids	67%	30%	1%	1%	1%
Promoting childhood literacy	64%	33%	0%	1%	1%
Children ready for college/work	63%	33%	2%	1%	1%
Parents have a place to turn in a crisis	54%	40%	2%	1%	3%
Improving student achievement	50%	45%	4%	1%	1%
Quality child care	51%	43%	3%	2%	2%
Pre-natal/infant health care	47%	47%	1%	1%	4%
Children ready to enter school	45%	48%	4%	1%	3%
Quality after-school experiences	40%	43%	11%	2%	4%
Quality UPK	30%	44%	17%	4%	5%

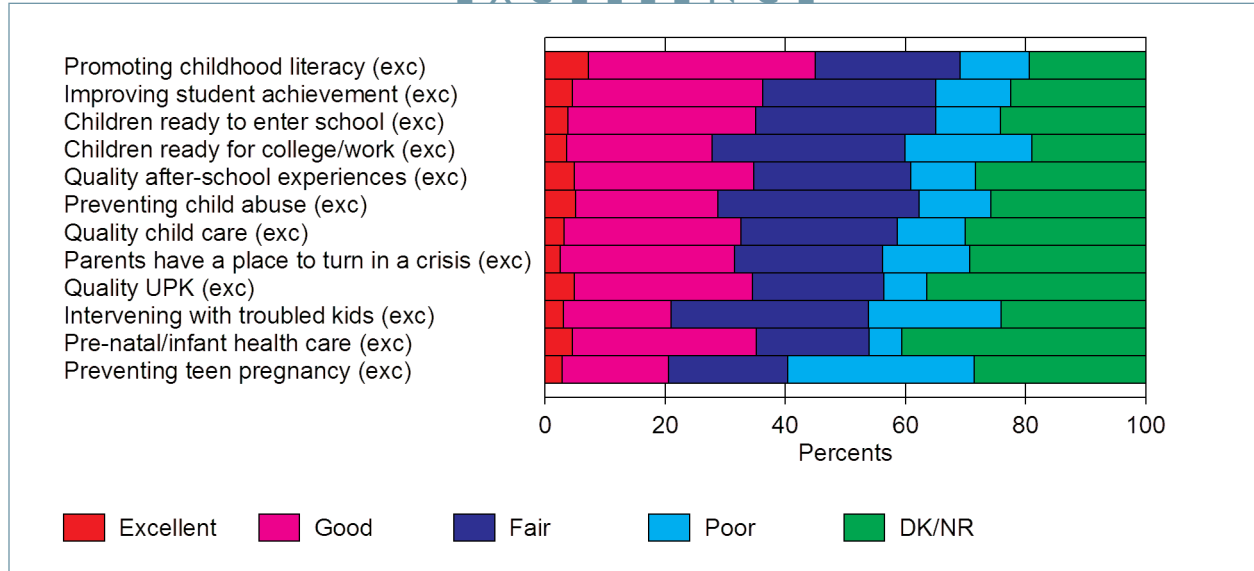
While all needs were seen as generally important, by their “very important” ratings Jacksonville voters clearly priorities the issues of child abuse and teen pregnancy prevention, intervention, promoting childhood literacy, and properly preparing children for the world of college or work.

Higher priorities are assigned to these result-based factors and slightly lower priorities to factors that are more process-based (*i.e. quality child care, pre-natal/infant care, UPK, etc.*)

## Children's Services - Excellence

The chart and table below show the same factors as arrayed for their perceived performance (or excellence) in the larger Jacksonville community. These are the voters' ratings of "how we're doing" in these categories.

### EXCELLENCE



### Performance (Excellence)

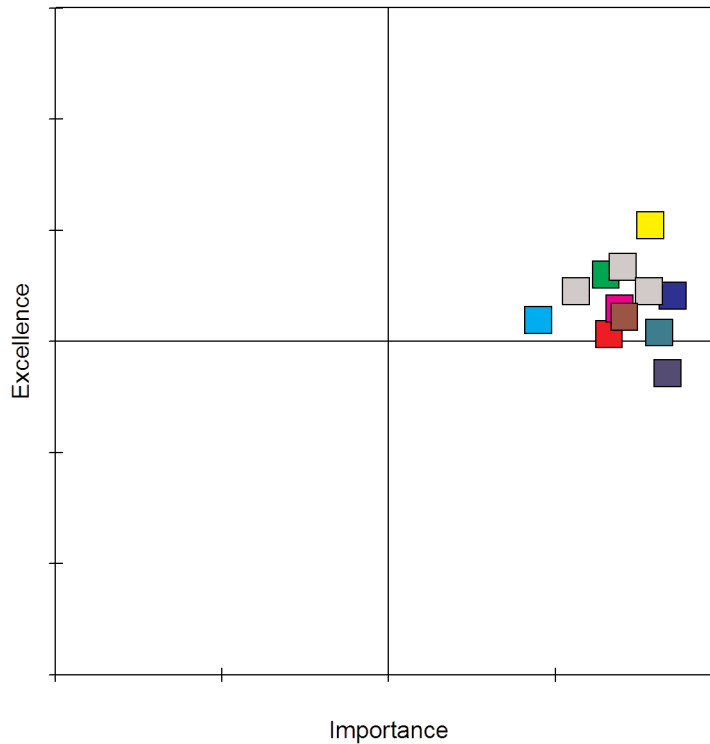
Performance (Excellence)	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DK/NR
Promoting childhood literacy	7%	38%	24%	12%	19%
Improving student achievement	5%	32%	29%	12%	23%
Children ready to enter school	4%	31%	30%	11%	24%
Children ready for college/work	4%	24%	32%	21%	19%
Quality after-school experiences	5%	30%	26%	11%	28%
Preventing child abuse	5%	24%	33%	12%	26%
Quality child care	3%	29%	26%	11%	30%
Parents have a place to turn in a crisis	3%	29%	25%	15%	29%
Quality UPK	5%	30%	22%	7%	36%
Intervening with troubled kids	3%	18%	33%	22%	24%
Pre-natal/infant health care	5%	31%	19%	5%	41%
Preventing teen pregnancy	3%	18%	20%	31%	29%

Jacksonville voters give significantly lower marks to the performance of the Jacksonville community with regard to these factors than they do to their importance. They also show a high "Don't Know / No Response" profile on community performance on these issues, indicating a clear need for more information.

The following page shows a scatter-plot of the voters' importance vs. performance ratings.

Clearly, local efforts to advocate and advance childhood literacy have had a substantial impact on the electorate. This factor not only shows the one of the highest importance ratings but also the strongest performance rating (and the one of the very smallest non-response rates.) Quality UPK, school-readiness, improving student achievement, and college/work readiness all score low.

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES - EXCELLENCE



## Mean

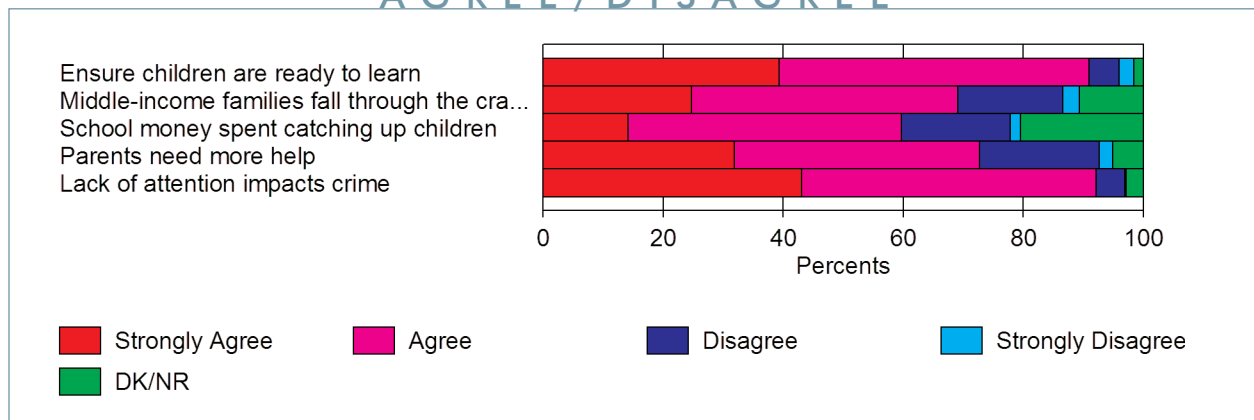
- Pre-natal/infant health care (imp) vs Pre-natal/infant health care (exc)
- Quality child care (imp) vs Quality child care (exc)
- Preventing child abuse (imp) vs Preventing child abuse (exc)
- Quality UPK (imp) vs Quality UPK (exc)
- Children ready to enter school (imp) vs Children ready to enter school (exc)
- Promoting childhood literacy (imp) vs Promoting childhood literacy (exc)
- Quality after-school experiences (imp) vs Quality after-school experiences (exc)
- Improving student achievement (imp) vs Improving student achievement (exc)
- Preventing teen pregnancy (imp) vs Preventing teen pregnancy (exc)
- Children ready for college/work (imp) vs Children ready for college/work (exc)
- Intervening with troubled kids (imp) vs Intervening with troubled kids (exc)
- Parents have a place to turn in a crisis (imp) vs Parents have a place to turn in a crisis (exc)

## Needs of Children - Perspectives

Respondents were read five statements and asked whether they agreed or disagreed, and then whether they felt strongly about their answers. The individual items were:

- Jacksonville should do everything it can to ensure that every child enters school ready to learn.
- Middle-income families often “fall through the cracks” in getting support they need to raise their children.
- School systems spend a lot of money in catching-up children who entered the system without being ready to learn.
- Parents need more help today than they did when I was growing up.
- Lack of attention to the needs of children has a serious impact on the rate of crime in our neighborhoods

### AGREE / DISAGREE



Agree/Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NR
Ensure children are ready to learn	39%	52%	5%	2%	2%
Middle-income families fall through the cracks	25%	44%	17%	3%	11%
School money spent catching up children	14%	46%	18%	2%	21%
Parents need more help	32%	41%	20%	2%	5%
Lack of attention impacts crime	43%	49%	5%	0%	3%

Strong majorities of Jacksonville voters agree that ...

- a “Lack of attention to the needs of children has a serious impact on the rate of crime in our neighborhoods” (92% aggregate agreement) and that
- Jacksonville should do everything it can to ensure that every child enters school ready to learn (91% aggregate agreement.)

While there is broad agreement with the other statements, it is clear that there is a fundamental spike in public consensus around the adult-crime impact of neglecting Jacksonville’s children and around ensuring school readiness.

## Conclusions:

Initially it was posited that there were four primary issues to be addressed:

1. What priority do citizens of Duval County hold for the status of and services to children?
2. How do citizens think the community is doing with respect to the state of children?
3. What issue perspectives do Duval County citizens have regarding children in the community?
4. How can these priorities and perspectives be used to tool more effective communication by members of the coalition?

**1. Priority:** Jacksonville voters show a clear priority for Improving public education (51%) and for helping families and children (24%).

Among specific priorities for the needs of children, voters specified:

- Preventing child abuse (73%)
- Preventing teen pregnancy (73%)
- Intervening with troubled kids (67%)
- Promoting childhood literacy (64%)
- Children ready for college/ work (63%)

**2. Performance:** Jacksonville voters rate community performance lower than they do importance. They also evidence significantly higher “No Response” rates on community performance on these issues.

Childhood literacy shows both a high importance rating and a strong performance rating (and one of the very smallest non-response rates.) Quality UPK, school-readiness, improving student achievement, and college/work readiness all score low.

**3. Perspectives:** Jacksonville voters clearly associate neglect of children’s issues with adult crime. They also place a very high priority on school readiness.

**4. Communication:** Jacksonville voters clearly call for more information regarding the performance of various systems to assist children (and their families!)

It should be noted that a strong majority (73%) agree with the proposition that “Parents need more help today than they did when I was growing up” and that 54% rated as “Very Important” making sure that parents have a place to turn in a crisis.

**Summary:** While they evidence a clear desire for more information, it is also clear that Jacksonville voters rate the needs (importance) of children in the community much higher than the performance (excellence) of the community and its institutions in meeting those needs.

These voters believe that all factors surveyed are important to the city’s children, but they also clearly prioritize school-readiness and the tie between neglecting children’s needs and experiencing adult crime.