

KARE 11
ON AIR | ONLINE | MOBILE



Weather Day May 22 [CLICK HERE](#)

A Few Clouds 46°F [DETAILED FORECAST](#)
[RADAR](#) [MORE WEATHER](#)

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [WEATHER](#) [SPORTS](#) [TRAFFIC](#) [FEATURED LINKS](#) [ON THE GO? LOG ONTO M.KARE11.COM >>](#)

SEARCH [▶](#)

Need more information on KARE's Community Projects?
[CLICK HERE](#) [▶](#)

DTV/HDTV ANSWERS [▶](#)

NEWS

- KARE Extras
- Local News
- National/World News
- Decision 2008
- EarthKARE
- Education News
- Health/Take KARE
- Latest Video
- Photo Gallery

TV SCHEDULE [▶](#)

KARE SHOWS

- KARE News @ 4:00pm
- KARE Saturday
- KARE Sunrise
- Minnesota Bound
- Showcase Minnesota
- Whatever Show

KARE ETC.

- Community
- Grow with KARE
- HealthFair 11
- KARE About Kids
- KARE Gameroom
- Recipes
- Road to China
- Simply Science
- KARE Tracks
- Contests

KAREMAIL [▶](#)

KARE STORE [▶](#)

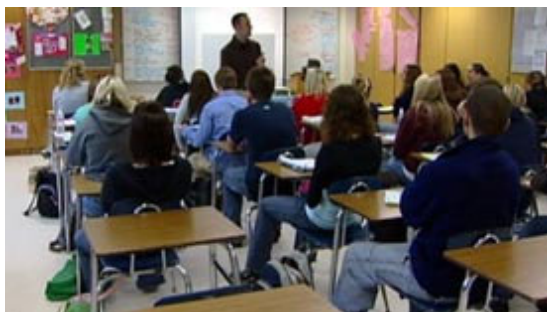
BOOKMARKS

- KARE Crossword
- KARE Sudoku
- Career Center
- eHarmony
- Entertainment
- Explore Minnesota
- Real Estate
- Rescue My Home
- Travel with KARE

ABOUT US

- Personalities
- KARE in HD
- KARE Mobile
- Employment
- Contact Us
- Advertise with Us
- FAQ

Report card on girls in Minnesota finds large ethnic gaps



[Video](#) [View John Croman's Report](#)

- [Women's Foundation of Minnesota home page](#)

**Link(s) are intended as an information source and do not imply an endorsement of any particular product or point of view by KARE 11 News.

A staggering 43 percent of all African American girls in Minnesota are in households where the income is below the federal poverty line, which is the government's yardstick for determining eligibility for many assistance programs.

"In Minnesota female-headed families and those from underrepresented ethnic and racial groups, in particular, are at higher risk of living below the poverty line."

On the bright side, Minnesota's girls overall are doing better than their peers around the nation.

"Our research shows that Minnesota girls are full of promise and potential," said Lee Roper-Baker, who heads the Women's Foundation of Minnesota. "They work hard at home, in school and in their communities, they earn good grades, and they hold high aspirations for their futures."

"By and large, girls in our state take responsibility for their bodies, and avoid many risky behaviors," Roper-Baker said. "At the same time there are many roadblocks to girls' success."

She said racism, sexism and poverty all play roles in creating that gap. The foundation wants lawmakers to consider the opportunities they have to make a difference in the lives of young women.

"This research tells a story of two Minnesota's," Erica Williams told reporters at the Capitol. "One in which girls are largely doing pretty well, are working pretty hard, have low poverty rates overall."

Her report suggest that Minnesota's high performing children may be hiding the jarring discrepancies that exist between white girls and girls of other races and ethnicities.

"Another in which girls of color have drastically higher poverty rates, and actually are more likely to be poor than girls of color in the nation as a whole."

Girls of color are also far more likely to become teen mothers than their white counterparts in Minnesota, according to the study, and more likely to report sexual abuse outside and inside their home.

It's a problem, the study suggests, that is both a cause and a symptom of living in poverty.

"Teen pregnancy among girls of color both limits their opportunities for education and economic stability, and results itself from limited opportunity," Representative Neva Walker of Minneapolis remarked.

Representative Walker, who said she became a mother as a teenager herself, says the average parent struggles enough with raising kids.

"But just imagine how, if you would've had that child at 13 or 15 or 17, if you would be having that child without community support, without family support, without having the educational needs or financial opportunities to take care of your child."

The group hopes the research will be put to use in the debate at the Capitol and in communities as they struggle with budget cuts, some for programs that help single mothers heading households.

"When girls don't have a future for themselves outside of motherhood it puts them at risk," Walker said. "When girls don't have access to contraception or sex education because of lack of means or health care, it puts them at risk."

For Walker it was an emotionally charged day at the Capitol. She's retiring from the legislature after this session, and was planning to make one last run at getting a comprehensive sex education bill passed in the House.

"Prevention is the key," Walker offered. "We have to do better for our girls. We have to make sure our girls are starting off on the same level plane as our boys going into adulthood."

Sandra Vargas, who heads the Minneapolis Foundation, argued that spending priorities at the Capitol end up costing the state and its taxpayers more in the long run.


"Instead of putting investment up where it prevents and does early intervention," Vargas told reporters. "As a state we'd rather wait until a family and these young girls get pregnant and hit the criminal justice system, or some other kind of system, where it will cost taxpayers millions of dollars."

As a long time administrator in Hennepin County she's seen how society as a whole is forced to deal with the lifelong costs of not helping children when they need it the most.

"We do not have the political will to do prevention and we do not have the political will to do early intervention," Vargas said. "Some how we have found we've got the political will to build more prisons."

Living Green Expo

See the latest in eco-friendly living: exhibitors, workshops, more



May 3-4

Suzanne Koeplinger, the director of the Minnesota Indian Women's Research Center, said girls of color are more often forced to deal with issues others can avoid.

"Many of our girls are facing challenges beyond their years including threats to their basic safety and security," Koeplinger told reporters, "The high percentage of American Indian, African American and Hispanic girls reporting sexual abuse is startling, and quite frankly, it's unacceptable."

Self-esteem trends are also disturbing, given research that shows that girls self-esteem actually erodes over time while boys opinions of themselves improve with age. That's a trend that cuts across all racial and ethnic groups, according to the report.

The Women's Foundation is launching what it calls the Road to Equality Tour to 15 communities in Minnesota, to gather more information and seek practical solutions.



By [John Croman](#), KARE 11 News

Copyright KARE 2008. All Rights Reserved.

Last Updated: 4/28/2008 10:05:26 PM

"Teeth Whiteners Exposed"

7 Teeth Whitening Products Tested, Rated, and Reviewed. A Must Read!



Grants for Single Mothers

\$20,000 Grants for Single Mothers Never Repay - Get Your Free Kit Now

Ads by Google

KARE does not endorse any candidate or advertiser

TODAY'S MOST POPULAR STORIES

- [Woman killed on her morning walk in Northfield, husband injured](#)
- [Surviving the Economy: Dig out of debt](#)
- [Wedding and prom dresses locked up in abandoned bridal shop](#)
- [Police raid suspected meth house, only find fish tank](#)
- [Local swim team dives into coach's firing](#)
- [Former Viking murdered in Florida](#)
- [Iron teenage girl dies in crash involving 4 teens](#)
- [Video released of state trooper plowed over by motorist](#)



[Email this Story to a Friend](#)



[Get News via RSS](#)



[Get KAREmail - A Daily News Headlines Email](#)



[Printable Version](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [Terms and Conditions of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Rights](#) | [Advertise with Us](#)

8811 Olson Memorial Hwy, Minneapolis, MN 55427
KARE-11 is a Division of Multimedia Holdings Corporation ©1998-2008 KARE-11 All Rights Reserved