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The 50 Safest Cities to Raise a Child in 2020



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Dig more into how COVID-19 affects crime and everyday life in the US with our [coronavirus crime roundup](#) and [COVID-19 on campus](#) column.

Finding a healthy home for your family involves more than financing and schools. It's also about feeling safe. While no living situation is worry-free, some places rank four to ten times lower than the most dangerous cities for things like property crime, violent crime, or sex offenders.

To better help current and prospective parents make decisions about where they live, we created a list of the safest cities to raise a child. We discovered that population plays a role—a lower population typically indicates a lower crime rate.

For the purposes of this report, the terms "safest" and "dangerous" refer explicitly to crime rates as calculated from FBI crime data—no other characterization of any community is implied or intended.



Here are the ten safest cities in the US for families in 2020:

1. Naperville, Illinois
2. Johns Creek, Georgia
3. Newton, Massachusetts

4. Carmel, Indiana
5. Cary, North Carolina
6. Arlington Heights, Illinois
7. Flower Mound, Texas
8. Fishers, Indiana
9. San Ramon, California
10. Plymouth, Minnesota

See the full list of [America's 50 safest cities for families](#).

In this report

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Why look at cities for family safety?

Our Safest Cities in America series covers many bases, but we thought it would help to focus on the crimes that impact families. The safest cities on our list rank low for property crimes, violent crimes, and the number of sex offenders.

As we consider these factors, we also realize that 2020 brought the new challenge of the coronavirus.

Coronavirus as a concern for families

Parenting during a pandemic brings new challenges and decisions to keep your family safe. As of October 22, 2020, there are over 8.3 million cases of the novel coronavirus in the US, and we're facing upwards of 221,000 deaths and rising.¹

We know that people under the age of 21 are far less likely to die from COVID-19, but difficulties with sickness or long-term effects are still possible.² Kids can still transmit the coronavirus at significant rates too.³

We saw a link between higher populations and higher crime rates, but population density isn't the sole factor for higher coronavirus infection rates.⁴ Experts are still detailing other socioeconomic and cultural factors that contribute to spreading, but living in a bigger city doesn't always mean more coronavirus exposure.

A closer look at crime in America's safest family cities

If your family is looking for a new place to call home, we've done the safety research for you. Crime statistics won't tell you everything, but they're a good indicator of how safe or dangerous a neighborhood is—knowing what you're getting into before moving can save you a lot of trouble.

The top 50 safest cities for families see far less criminal activity than the national average. The top 50 cities had far lower populations and significantly reduced violent crime, property crime, and sex offender rates.

Averages	Population	Sex offenders per 1,000	Violent crime per 1,000	Property crime per 1,000
Top 50 safest cities	116,798	0.51	1.13	11.46
50 most dangerous cities	321,348	4.42	11.44	49.30
All analyzed cities	238,308	1.93	4.67	28.15

And just because these populations are smaller doesn't mean you won't be able to get a taste of big city living either—many of these cities are close enough to urban centers to commute.

Choosing to live in a safe city lowers your risk significantly. Compared to the safest cities, the most dangerous cities saw these stats (per 1,000 people):

- Nearly nine times more sex offenders
- Ten times more violent crime rates
- Over four times as many property crimes



Violent crime rates

The 50 safest cities to raise a child have a violent crime rate over **3 times lower** than the national average.



In 2019, the FBI reported 1,203,808 violent crimes nationally.⁵ The national violent crime rate is 3.7 per 1,000 people—nearly three times higher than the safest cities for families (1.13 per 1,000).

- Cary, North Carolina, has a violent crime rate of 0 per 1,000.
- 21 cities had a violent crime rate of less than 1 per 1,000.
- Somerville, Massachusetts had the highest rate (2.15 per 1,000) out of any of our safest cities but still falls below the national average of 3.7 per 1,000.

Violent crime rates are decreasing year over year, but there's always more to consider when it comes to keeping your family safe.

Safest cities for families: Property crime



Property crime rates

The 50 safest cities to raise a child have a property crime rate about **2 times lower** than the national average.



The safest cities for families have a property crime rate of 11.46 per 1,000 people—roughly half the national average of 22 per 1,000 people. And these cities are far safer than the most dangerous cities, which have a property crime rate of 49.30 per 1,000.

- Naperville, Illinois, had a crime rate of 0 per 1,000, which is quite exceptional.
- The next lowest property crime rate was 6.23 per 1,000 in Johns Creek, Georgia.
- The average property crime rate for the top 10 safest cities was 7.77 per 1,000.

Property crimes have decreased nationally by nearly 23% from 2009 to 2018,⁶ but in our [State of Safety survey](#), most people (67%) think crime is on the rise.

Safest cities for families: Sex offenders



Registered sex offenders

The 50 safest cities to raise a child have a registered sex offender rate over 3 times lower than the national average.



The top 50 safest cities for families average far fewer sex offenders than the national rate of 1.93 per 1,000. But for some cities, their sex offender rate is virtually non-existent.

The following cities had less than 0.10 sex offenders per 1,000 people:

- Mount Pleasant, SC (0.02)
- Johns Creek, GA (0.02)
- Newton, MA (0.04)
- Plymouth, MN (0.05)
- Santa Clarita, CA (0.07)

Hampton, Virginia was the only top 50 city that had a higher rate of sex offenders (3.47 per 1,000) than the national average (1.3 per 1,000).

Key Findings about America's Safest Cities to Raise a Child

Statistically speaking, smaller cities are safer than bigger cities. The average population of the safest cities is three times less than the most dangerous cities.

Population

- The average population of the top 50 safest cities is 116,798.
- The average population of the 50 most dangerous cities is 321,348.
- The average population of all cities analyzed is 238,308.

Even the safest small towns still have crime, but knowing where a city ranks for crime is an easy step you can take to [feel secure in your home](#).

States, regions, and cities that stand out

- **California and Texas:** The two states with the most cities on our top 50 list are California (13 cities) and Texas (9 cities). Last year, California had 14 cities on the safest cities list. Texas had seven.
- **Eastern US:** Aside from those two states, most of the top 50 cities are spread throughout the eastern half of the U.S.
- **Los Angeles:** Eight different cities surrounding Los Angeles made the list, meaning parents who love the city life can still visit downtown without facing higher crime rates at home.
- **New York:** For folks looking to live near New York City without paying the in-city prices or dealing with higher crime rates, Clifton, NJ, and New Rochelle, NY, made the top 50 lists.
- **Texas:** The Lone Star State has plenty of safe options for those who want to live near bigger cities like Austin, Dallas, and Houston.
- **North Carolina:** North Carolina had 10 cities with a 0 per 1,000 violent crime rate. Cary, NC, was the only city that ranked in the top 50 for all three categories. Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC was the only city to have a 0 per 1,000 rate for sex offenders.

The safest towns vs. the most dangerous towns

- Compared to the safest cities for families, violent crime is over ten times more prevalent in America's most dangerous cities.

- Detroit, Michigan had the highest crime rate per 1,000 (20.08), followed by Memphis, Tennessee (3.54), and Birmingham, Alabama (2.94).
- The average violent crime rate for the safest cities was 1.13 per 1000.
- Property crime is ten times less in America's safest cities for families compared to the most dangerous cities.
- Two cities had a 0 per 1,000 property crime rate: Naperville, Illinois, and Hampton, Virginia.
- The most dangerous cities had as many as 4.42 sex offenders per 1,000 people, whereas the average rate for the safest cities was 0.51 per 1,000 people.

The Top 10 Safest Cities to Raise Children



1. Naperville, Illinois (8↑)

- Population** 148,457
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000)** 0.20
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000)** 0.69
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000)** 0.00

Image source: Facebook @NapervilleIL



2. Johns Creek, Georgia (1↑)

- Population** 85,446
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000)** 0.02
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000)** 0.40
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000)** 6.23

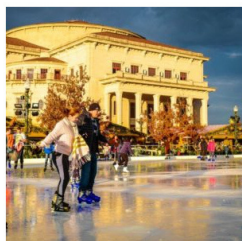
Image source: Facebook @JohnsCreekGAgov



3. Newton, Massachusetts (1↓)

- Population** 89,505
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000)** 0.04
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000)** 0.65
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000)** 7.03

Image source: Facebook @CityofNewtonMA



4. Carmel, Indiana (4↓)

- Population** 94,128
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000)** 0.16
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000)** 0.46
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000)** 7.61

Image source: Facebook @CityofCarmel



5. Cary, North Carolina (New)

- Population** 170,518



- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000) 0.19
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000) 0.00
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000) 9.77

Image source: Wikipedia



6. Arlington Heights, Illinois (New)

- Population 75,688
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000) 0.37
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000) 0.37
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000) 8.30

Image source: Wikipedia



7. Flower Mound, Texas (2↓)

- Population 78,542
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000) 0.20
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000) 0.57
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000) 8.44

Image source: Facebook @FlowerMound



8. Fishers, Indiana (4↓)

- Population 94,035
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000) 0.32
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000) 0.49
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000) 8.67

Image source: Facebook @fishers.indiana



9. San Ramon, California (2↓)

- Population 76,569
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000) 0.14
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000) 0.56
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000) 10.27

Image source: Facebook @citysanramon



10. Plymouth, Minnesota (4↓)

- Population 79,559
- Sex Offender Rate (per 10,000) 0.05
- Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000) 0.55
- Property Crime Rate (per 1,000) 11.36



Image source: Facebook @plymouthmn

The rest of the 50 Safest Cities to Raise Children

Rank	City	Population	Sex offenders per 1,000	Violent crime per 1,000	Property crime per 1,000
11	Farmington Hills, MI	81,239	0.73	0.85	8.38
12	New Rochelle, NY	80,340	0.45	1.22	8.29
13	Irvine, CA	288,052	0.13	0.56	12.70
14	Bolingbrook, IL	75,451	0.61	1.48	7.85
15	Mission Viejo, CA	96,419	0.43	1.17	9.72
16	Thousand Oaks, CA	129,319	0.28	0.97	11.44
17	Santa Clarita, CA	216,589	0.07	1.35	11.25
18	Murrieta, CA	114,706	0.46	0.80	12.31
19	Lake Forest, CA	85,302	0.32	1.86	8.92
20	Port St. Lucie, FL	193,137	0.93	1.13	9.58
21	Gilbert, AZ	247,463	0.19	0.95	13.23
22	Frisco, TX	187,889	0.19	0.87	13.64
23	McKinney, TX	189,555	0.50	1.52	10.45
24	Chino Hills, CA	81,177	0.34	0.95	13.29
25	Troy, MI	84,221	0.58	0.62	13.74
26	Allen, TX	103,168	0.50	1.08	12.38
27	Cedar Park, TX	79,087	0.42	1.23	12.21
28	Franklin, TN	80,825	0.47	1.47	12.15
29	Mount Pleasant, SC	89,733	0.02	1.54	13.61
30	Sterling Heights, MI	133,055	0.84	1.80	10.03
31	Glendale, CA	204,724	0.27	0.99	15.19
32	San Marcos, CA	98,088	0.43	2.06	10.73
33	Missouri City, TX	75,628	1.26	1.35	10.78
34	Pearland, TX	124,179	0.62	0.95	14.83
35	Parma, OH	78,968	1.18	1.57	10.71
36	Hampton, VA	133,965	3.47	2.36	0.00
37	Simi Valley, CA	127,222	0.85	1.68	11.72
38	Somerville, MA	82,161	0.15	2.15	12.41
39	Clifton, NJ	85,732	0.34	1.13	15.79
40	Folsom, CA	78,916	0.41	1.08	15.78
41	Coral Springs, FL	134,640	0.18	1.55	15.05
42	Surprise, AZ	136,611	0.46	1.21	15.39
43	League City, TX	108,275	0.33	1.01	16.75
44	Roswell, GA	95,677	0.34	1.32	15.68
45	Cape Coral, FL	187,869	0.77	1.42	14.38
46	Sugar Land, TX	89,919	0.54	0.91	17.09

47	Pleasanton, CA	84,992	0.25	1.29	17.00
48	Edmond, OK	93,557	0.86	1.36	15.22
49	Meridian, ID	103,774	1.54	1.59	12.14
50	Danbury, CT	85,818	1.18	1.55	13.55

America's 10 Most Dangerous Cities to Raise a Child

No place is ever crime-free, but out of the 448 cities we reviewed, these cities had the highest crime rates for violent crime, property crime, and sex offenders.

Rank	City	Population	Violent crime per 1,000	Property crime per 1,000	Sex offenders per 1,000
1	Richmond, VA	229,927	5.18	38.3	29.24
2	Saint Louis, MO	306,875	18.00	59.12	8.57
3	Memphis, TN	652,226	19.43	64.06	3.54
4	Birmingham, AL	210,564	19.12	63.14	2.94
5	Springfield, MO	168,537	13.16	70.19	4.90
6	Detroit, MI	671,275	20.08	43.05	5.22
7	Kalamazoo, MI	76,020	13.26	13.26	9.43
8	Flint, MI	95,677	18.18	27.01	9.82
9	Little Rock, AR	199,288	14.46	65.48	2.16
10	Baltimore, MD	605,436	18.33	44.95	2.59

Geography and population

- The 50 most dangerous cities to raise a child are heavily concentrated in the Southeast and Great Lakes regions.
- These cities had a median population of 216,837 and an average population of 321,348.
- Both Kalamazoo, MI (#7) and Flint, Michigan (#8) had relatively lower populations but still faced higher crime rates, particularly for sex offenders.

Violent crime

- Detroit, Michigan, had the highest violent crime rate of 20.08 per 1,000, followed by Memphis, Tennessee (19.43), and Birmingham, Alabama (19.12).
- Richmond, Virginia, had the lowest violent crime rate out of the most dangerous cities at 5.18 per 1,000.

Property crime

- Miami Beach, Florida had the highest property crime rate at 74.76 per 1,000 people.
- The average property crime rate for the top 10 most dangerous cities was 52.56 per 1,000.

Sex offenders

- By far, Richmond, Virginia, had the highest number of sex offenders on the list at 29.24 for every 1,000 people.
- The next highest sex offender rates were Flint, Michigan, (9.82), and Kalamazoo, Michigan (9.43).

Cities that made last year's Top 50 Safest Cities to Raise a Child

As cities either see a reduction or increase in crime rates, they'll jump around a bit on the charts. Compared to last year's list, 11 cities improved their rank, while 22 cities dropped in position.

2020 rank	City	2019 rank	Year-over-year change
1	New Rochelle, NY	9	8
2	Bolingbrook, IL	3	1
3	Cedar Park, TX	2	-1
4	Sterling Heights, MI	1	-3
7	San Marcos, CA	5	-2
8	Missouri City, TX	4	-4
9	Pearland, TX	7	-2
10	Parma, OH	6	-4
11	Farmington Hills, MI	22	11
13	Irvine, CA	10	-3
15	Mission Viejo, CA	11	-4
16	Thousand Oaks, CA	17	1
17	Santa Clarita, CA	25	8
18	Murrieta, CA	20	2
19	Lake Forest, CA	13	-6
20	Port St. Lucie, FL	41	21
21	Gilbert, AZ	12	-9
22	Frisco, TX	14	-8
23	McKinney, TX	29	6
24	Chino Hills, CA	27	3
25	Troy, MI	19	-6
26	Allen, TX	16	-10
28	Franklin, TN	32	4
29	Mount Pleasant, SC	15	-14
31	Glendale, CA	50	19
38	Somerville, MA	34	-4
40	Folsom, CA	24	-16
42	Surprise, AZ	35	-7
43	League City, TX	18	-25
44	Roswell, GA	33	-11
45	Cape Coral, FL	45	-
46	Sugar Land, TX	21	-25
47	Pleasanton, CA	30	-17
48	Edmond, OK	31	-17

More changes to the safest cities for families list this year

- 32% (16) of the safest cities for families made the list for the first time this year.
- Port St. Lucie (+21) and Glendale (+19) saw the most significant increases in rank from last year.
- League City (-25) and Sugar Land (-25) saw the most significant drops but still made the list.
- Cape Coral, Florida, remained ranked 45th safest city in the US for families.

Our other Safest Cities reports

- [The 50 Safest Small Towns in America](#)
- [The 50 Safest College Towns in America](#)
- [The State of Safety in America](#)
- [The 100 Safest Cities in America](#)
- [The 10 Safest Metro Cities in America](#)
- [The 10 Most Dangerous Cities in America](#)

How we picked the safest cities for families

We compiled the list of the safest and most dangerous cities to raise a child by analyzing the [FBI's 2018 violent and property crime report statistics](#) (the most recent data available at the time of our analysis).

Cities were ranked according to the rate of reported violent crimes (including aggravated assault, murder, rape, and robbery) and property crimes (burglary, arson, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft). By considering crime data alongside the number of currently registered (during the week of Sept. 28) [sex offenders per capita](#), we calculated our final safety score.

Violent crime and property crime were each weighted as 30% of a city's score. Sex offenders per capita made up 40% of the score. Scores were then standardized to calculate our rankings for the safest cities to raise a child. This year, unlike the 2019 report, we did not account for graduation rates in our ranking or data analysis.

Cities were excluded from this list if they fell below the population threshold of 75,000 or didn't submit a complete crime report to the FBI. To level the playing field, violent and property crime rates were calculated per 1,000 people in each city.

How to make a safe home anywhere

Wherever you live, we encourage everyone to be proactive about home security.



Get a home security system

Learn more about your [home security options](#)—and find out which companies we recommend for every budget and lifestyle in our roundup of the [Best Home Security Systems](#).

Child Safety Resources on SafeWise

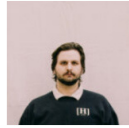
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Trevor's written about your money, your life topics for over six years. His work has been featured on Forbes, RealSimple, USA Today, MSN, BusinessInsider, Entrepreneur, PCMag, and CNN. When he's not researching and writing, you can find him around Salt Lake City, Utah, snapping photos of mountains and architecture or seeking out some good tunes and friendly faces.

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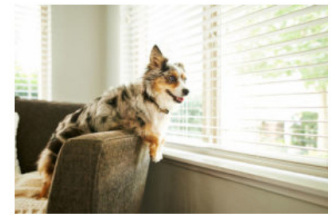
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