State Profiles of Child Well-Being

2011 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

AMERICA'S CHILDREN, AMERICA'S CHALLENGE

Promoting Opportunity for the Next Generation

State Profiles of Child Well-Being

2011 KIDS COUNT® DATA BOOK

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

AMERICA'S CHILDREN, AMERICA'S CHALLENGE

Promoting Opportunity for the Next Generation

701 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
www.aecf.org

Designed by KINETIK
www.kinetikcom.com

Photography © Jason Miczek

Data compiled by
Population Reference Bureau
www.prb.org

Printed and bound in the United States of America on recycled paper using soy-based inks.

ISSN 1060-9814

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's *KIDS COUNT Data Book* could not be produced and distributed without the help of numerous people. The publication was assembled and produced under the general direction of Laura Speer. Other Casey staff who contributed to this report include Sue Lin Chong, Don Crary, Florencia Gutierrez, Lisa Hamilton, Jann Jackson, Michael Laracy, Julee Newberger, Beadsie Woo, and members of the KIDS COUNT team. Nancy Cauthen and Amy Saltzman provided writing and research support, and Debbie Cohen and Betsy Rubiner wrote the family stories.

Most of the data presented in the *Data Book* were collected and organized by the staff at the Population Reference Bureau. We are especially grateful to Jean D'Amico, Genevieve Dupuis, Nadwa Mossaad, and Kelvin Pollard, who assembled, organized, checked, and re-checked the figures used here.

Special thanks are also due the staff at KINETIK Communication Graphics, Inc., for design and production services; the staff at Hager Sharp, for helping to promote and disseminate the *Data Book*; Connie Dykstra of The Hatcher Group, for managing production; and Jayson Hait of eye4detail, for proofreading and copyediting.

Finally, we would like to thank the state KIDS COUNT projects (see page 74), for making the *Data Book* available to national, state, and local leaders across the country.

The 2011 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* can be viewed, downloaded, or ordered on the Internet at www.kidscount.org.

Outreach Partners

The Annie E. Casey Foundation wishes to thank our Outreach Partners for their support and assistance in promoting and disseminating the 2011 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. With the help of our partners, data on the status and well-being of kids and families are shared with policymakers, advocates, practitioners, and citizens to help enrich local, state, and national discussions on ways to improve outcomes for America's most vulnerable children.

To learn more about the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2011 KIDS COUNT Outreach Partners, please visit www.kidscount.org for a complete list of organizations.

THE KIDS COUNT DATA CENTER

One-Stop Source for Child Well-Being Data

The KIDS COUNT Data Center provides easy online access to hundreds of child well-being indicators in areas of education, employment and income, health, poverty, and youth risk factors. Data are available for the nation and for states, as well as for many cities, counties, and school districts. The Data Center offers multiple tools to customize and share information. *Ranking, mapping, and graphing tools* allow customization of data that can be shared and updated through social media and other web-based applications.

Access the Data Center at:
datacenter.kidscount.org

New Mobile Site

All indicators currently found on the KIDS COUNT Data Center can be accessed quickly and easily anytime, anywhere at:
mobile.kidscount.org

State Profile Pages Now Available Online

National and State profile pages previously available in the *Data Book* are now accessible online at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011/profiles

CONTENTS




America's Children, America's Challenge

Promoting Opportunity for the Next Generation

For the past 21 years, the KIDS COUNT project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation has tracked the well-being of children at the national, state, and local levels. Over the years, our work has documented both great progress in child well-being and periodic setbacks.

The 10 key indicators we've tracked in the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* over the past two decades reveal significant overall improvements in health and safety outcomes for children. For example, infant mortality declined, as did death rates for children and teens. Outcomes for teenagers have generally improved, with decreases in both the high school dropout rate and the teen birth rate.

Despite these positive signs, however, there remain pockets of deep concern. Over the same two-decade period, the percent of low-birthweight babies increased, which means that more babies are born at risk for developmental delays and other problems as they grow. In addition, far more children live in single-parent families; such children typically have fewer economic and human resources available to them than children growing up in two-parent homes.

The most worrisome trend of all is the decline in economic well-being for children and families at the lower half of the income distribution. The last decade—the recession and the years preceding it—wiped out tremendous gains made in the late 1990s when child poverty declined dramatically, especially among African Americans, as did the percent of children growing up without at least one parent employed full time, year-round. After dropping to a low of 39 percent in 2000, the percent of children living in low-income families (that is, with incomes of twice the official poverty line) gradually began to increase. Since 2001, the number of low-income children climbed steadily from 27 million to 31 million in 2009, or 42 percent of children. The official child poverty rate, which is a conservative measure of economic hardship, reached 20 percent in 2009, essentially the same level as 1990. (See the sidebar, "Measuring Economic Hardship.")

Against this troubling backdrop, our 2011 KIDS COUNT essay examines trends in the economic well-being of children and

31 million

Since 2001, the number of low-income children climbed steadily from 27 million to 31 million in 2009.

Despite significant disagreements over the best way forward, there is widespread acknowledgment that our country's long-term prosperity depends on how well we prepare the next generation to meet the challenges of a competitive global economy.

families in the wake of the recession and their implications for the nation's economic future. Although the recession is technically over, it is clear that a large portion of America's families continue to confront daunting challenges.

KIDS COUNT analysis shows a significant jump in the number of children living in families with at least one unemployed parent; it also reveals that millions of children have been affected by the home foreclosure crisis. Unemployment remains high, median household income is down, and many families have depleted their savings and other assets. As they struggle to recover, families face the reality that intergenerational economic mobility in the United States has not changed much over the past 40 years. If anything, it has declined. Children born to families at the lower end of the income scale have a particularly hard time improving their economic position relative to their parents'.[1]

The good news is that we have a great deal of knowledge about how to help struggling families get back on track and increase their children's chances for success, while building a vibrant economy. Our nation's economic and fiscal health is inextricably tied to our willingness to put that knowledge to work—to invest in proven strategies that help children reach their full potential and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to contribute to a growing economy and a vibrant society.

We recognize and appreciate the very difficult decisions ahead as policymakers in Washington, DC, and state capitols across the country grapple with budget deficits at all levels of government. Current debates about what to cut from the budget, what to preserve, and whether to raise additional revenues will ultimately need to be resolved through tough choices and compromises. Despite significant disagreements over the best way forward, there is widespread acknowledgment across the political spectrum that our country's long-term prosperity depends on how well we prepare the next generation to meet the challenges of a competitive global economy.

As policymakers deliberate these thorny and often controversial issues, we urge them to keep focused on the importance of preparing our children for the future. And that means focusing on the economic prospects of families today and on the educational success of all children.

The research is clear: Children who grow up in low-income families are less likely to successfully navigate life's challenges and achieve future success. The younger they are and the longer they are exposed to economic hardship, the higher the risk of failure. Our work at the Casey Foundation has shown that the most effective way to put children on a path to productive, successful adulthood is through two-generation strategies—strategies that both help parents move their families ahead economically and improve young children's health, development, and educational success.

We begin this essay with a review of the data on how children and families are faring in the wake of the recession. We then look at what the research says about the importance of family economic success and early childhood investments for increasing opportunity and preparing the next generation to succeed. Drawing from successful initiatives at the state and federal levels, we then discuss effective policies and programs that can help ensure a strong economic future for the country.

MEASURING ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

The Official Poverty Measure and the Low-Income Standard

For a family of four, the 2011 federal poverty level is $22,350 a year. However, this measure has not been revised since the 1960s. The current federal poverty measure equals about 30 percent of median household income, whereas in the 1960s, the poverty level was nearly 50 percent of the median.[2]

As a result, the official poverty measure is widely acknowledged to be an inaccurate depiction of a family's ability to meet basic needs. Research shows that families with incomes between 100 and 200 percent of the poverty level face material hardships and financial pressures similar to families officially counted as poor. For example, missed rent payments, utility shutoffs, inadequate access to health care, unstable child care arrangements, and food insecurity are experiences common among families with income below 200 percent of the poverty level.[3]

Research suggests that to meet their basic needs, families actually need an income of roughly twice the official poverty level ($44,700 a year for a family of four), which can include benefits like the Earned Income Tax Credit or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.[4] To assess economic well-being, analysts refer to families with income below 200 percent of poverty as "low income" and use this standard in addition to the official poverty measure.

Note that both the official poverty measure and the low-income standard refer only to a family's income and do not take into account savings, homeownership, or other types of assets, which are an integral part of family economic success.



HOW CHILDREN ARE FARING IN THE WAKE OF THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

A Worsening Picture for Vulnerable Children and Families

11 percent

Almost 11 percent of our nation's children had at least one unemployed parent in 2010, affecting nearly 8 million children.

The recession hit families with children hard, especially those who were already vulnerable. Three years after the downturn began, unemployment and the proportion of households at risk for foreclosure remain high, and many families have depleted what little savings or other assets they had. The result is that large numbers of our nation's children are living in families that continue to face deep economic insecurity. Racial and ethnic disparities in income and wealth are wider than before the crisis. Without positive action, these conditions will put a substantial portion of the nation's children at risk for adverse educational, health, and other negative outcomes that may limit their future productivity and our country's long-term economic stability.

Recent research confirms a causal link between family income and young children's academic achievement and later success, underscoring the critical importance of helping families maintain an income source during spells of unemployment.

Unemployment and Declines in Family Income. Recent research confirms a causal link between family income and young children's academic achievement and later success, underscoring the critical importance of helping families maintain an income source during spells of unemployment.[5]

Almost 11 percent of our nation's children had at least one unemployed parent in 2010, affecting nearly 8 million children. This number more than doubled between 2007 and 2010. African-American children were nearly twice as likely as white children to have an unemployed parent. Children whose more highly educated parent had only a high school diploma were far more likely to experience parental unemployment than children with a college-educated parent (see Table 1).

Although the unemployment rate has been gradually declining, economists agree it is likely to remain high for several years.[6] Furthermore, long-term unemployment—defined as being out of work for six months or more—has increased dramatically. At the start of the recession, the long-term unemployed accounted for 17 percent of those out of work. Today, they comprise 45 percent.[7]

Not surprising, household income declined during the recession, with significant differences by race and ethnicity. Median household income fell for all groups between 2007 and 2009, but the impact was particularly severe for African-American and Latino households, whose incomes were much lower to begin with (see Table 2).

As a result of unemployment and income loss, 42 percent of our nation's children, or about 31 million, lived in low-income families in 2009—an increase of more than 2 million children since 2007 (see Table 3).[8] Left unaddressed, such widespread economic insecurity will limit the potential of millions of children and hinder national economic progress.

TABLE 1

Percent of Children With an Unemployed Parent by Parent's Educational Attainment: 2007–2010

	2007	2008	2009	2010
TOTAL	5	6	11	11
Not a High School Graduate	9	11	16	16
High School Diploma or GED	6	8	13	14
Associate's Degree	4	6	10	11
Bachelor's Degree	3	4	7	7
Graduate Degree	2	3	5	5

SOURCE Population Reference Bureau analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS) Basic Monthly Data 2007–2010.
NOTE Parent's educational attainment is reflective of the parent with the higher level of education.

TABLE 2

Changes in Median Income for Households With Children by Race and Ethnicity: 2007 and 2009 (2009 dollars)

	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: 2009	CHANGE FROM 2007	PERCENT CHANGE FROM 2007
White	$64,566	–$2,752	–4.1
Black	$33,982	–$1,991	–5.5
Latino	$38,980	–$2,042	–5.0
Asian American	$81,957	–$87	–0.1

SOURCE Population Reference Bureau analysis of the American Community Survey, 2007 and 2009.

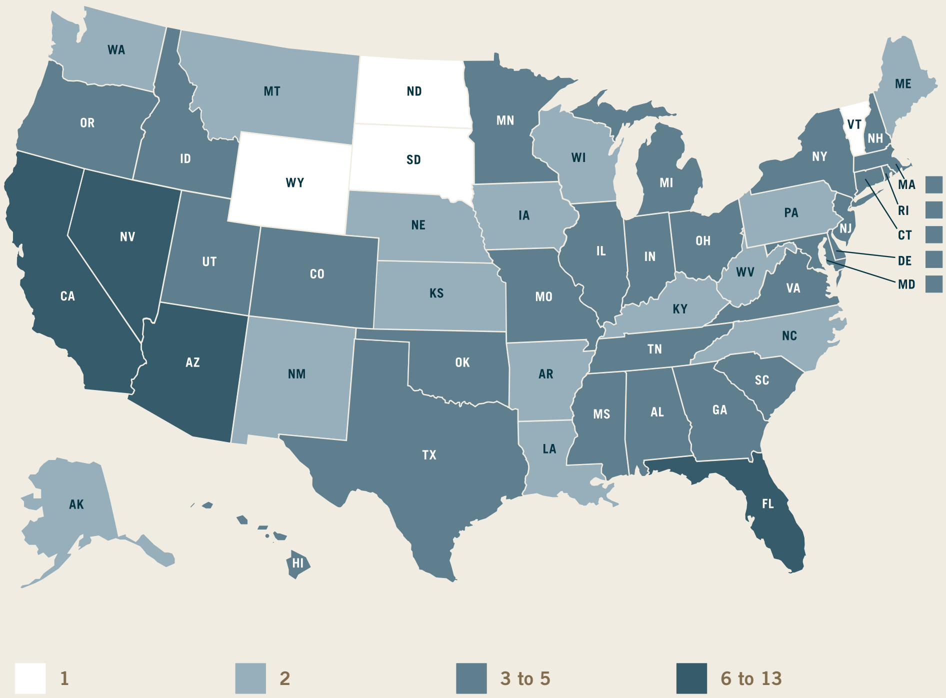
TABLE 3

Number and Percent of Children Living in Low-Income Families: 2007 and 2009

2007 NUMBER (PERCENT)	2009 NUMBER (PERCENT)	PERCENT INCREASE FROM 2007
28,610,000 (39%)	30,737,000 (42%)	7.4

SOURCE Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
NOTE Low-income families are defined as those with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level.

Percent of Children Affected by Foreclosure Since 2007



Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate
1	North Dakota	1	5	New Mexico	2	20	Mississippi	3	38	Indiana	4
1	South Dakota	1	5	North Carolina	2	20	Missouri	3	38	Maryland	4
1	Vermont	1	5	Pennsylvania	2	20	New Hampshire	3	38	New Jersey	4
1	Wyoming	1	5	Washington	2	20	New York	3	38	Ohio	4
5	Alaska	2	5	West Virginia	2	20	Oklahoma	3	38	Rhode Island	4
5	Arkansas	2	5	Wisconsin	2	20	Oregon	3	45	Georgia	5
5	Iowa	2	20	Alabama	3	20	South Carolina	3	45	Michigan	5
5	Kansas	2	20	Connecticut	3	20	Tennessee	3	47	California	7
5	Kentucky	2	20	Delaware	3	20	Texas	3	48	Arizona	8
5	Louisiana	2	20	Hawaii	3	20	Utah	3	49	Florida	10
5	Maine	2	20	Idaho	3	20	Virginia	3	50	Nevada	13
5	Montana	2	20	Massachusetts	3	38	Colorado	4	N.R.	District of Columbia	4
5	Nebraska	2	20	Minnesota	3	38	Illinois	4	N.R.	Puerto Rico	<0.5

N.R. Not Ranked.
SOURCE Population Reference Bureau's Analysis of Mortgage Bankers Association National Delinquency Survey and the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey.
Percent of Children Affected by Foreclosure Since 2007 is the estimate of the percentage of children under age 18 living in a household that entered foreclosure in 2007, 2008, or 2009. Children living in rental units are not included in this analysis.
See Definitions and Data Sources, page 68.

The foreclosure crisis widened the already enormous racial and ethnic gap in homeownership. Between 2005 and 2008, the foreclosure rate for blacks and Latinos was roughly 170 percent of that for whites and Asian Americans.

The effects of the economic crisis on children's well-being would have been far worse had it not been for federal extensions of Unemployment Insurance (UI). UI benefits not only stabilize families financially during job searches, but they also stimulate the economy by boosting consumer spending. At the low point of the recession, an estimated 1.8 million job losses were averted because of the stimulative effects of unemployment benefits, which kept the unemployment rate approximately 1.2 percentage points lower than it would have been.[9]

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) also mitigated the effects of the recession on children by temporarily expanding Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP, formerly food stamps); creating a temporary tax credit for working families (the Making Work Pay Credit); and expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.[10] These benefits helped families meet their children's most basic needs at home, while pumping money into the economy.

Foreclosure and Asset Loss. Research has shown that savings and homeownership are associated with improved cognitive development among school-age children, as well as with increased high school graduation rates.[11] Until the recent housing market meltdown, owning a home was one of the most reliable ways for lower-income families to build assets. Estimates produced for KIDS COUNT indicate that more than 5.3 million children have been affected by foreclosure since 2007 (see map).[12] Loss of a home can throw children's lives into turmoil and disrupt their education as their parents try to recover financially and find a permanent new home.

The foreclosure crisis widened the already enormous racial and ethnic gap in homeownership. Between 2005 and 2008, the foreclosure rate for blacks and Latinos was roughly 170 percent of that for whites and Asian Americans. By October 2010, the homeownership rate for whites stood at nearly 75 percent, while it was 45 percent for African Americans and 47 percent for Latinos.[13]

Another consequence of foreclosure has been to push more families into an expensive rental market. Whether they are renters or homeowners, housing costs are burdensome for many low-income families. In 2009, 67 percent of low-income children—nearly 21 million—lived in households where housing costs exceeded 30 percent of income, cutting into the resources available for food, transportation, child care, and medical expenses.[14]

Even before the foreclosure crisis, millions of families lacked the assets necessary to cope with an unexpected financial hardship, let alone save for the future. In 2005, 29 percent of families with children were considered "asset poor," meaning that their total assets (liquid and non-liquid) were worth less than three months of income at the official poverty level. By 2009, the percent of families with children who were asset poor had jumped to 37 percent. (In 2011, the income poverty level for a family of four is $22,350. The asset poverty level is a quarter of this, or $5,588 in assets.)

Differences in asset poverty by race and ethnicity are extreme. The 2009 rates of asset poverty among African-American families (59 percent) and Latino families (54 percent) were at least double the rate for white families (27 percent).[15]

37 percent

By 2009, the percent of families with children who were asset poor had jumped to 37 percent.

Health insurance is another valuable asset that protects families from high medical expenses and debt, while helping them obtain needed medical care. Over the past two decades, public coverage has played a vital role in keeping children insured. Increases in Medicaid eligibility and the creation of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) made public health insurance available to children living above the poverty line, reducing the numbers of uninsured children in low- and middle-income families alike. For example, the proportion of middle-income children without health insurance declined from 20 percent to 10 percent between 1985 and 2008, despite the widespread loss of employer-sponsored coverage during that time.[16] During the recession, ARRA helped states maintain public health insurance coverage for children, as well as absorb thousands of newly eligible children who became uninsured because of their parents' unemployment.

11.9 million

In 2008, an estimated 11.9 million parents with children under age 18 lacked health insurance coverage.

But large numbers of low- and middle-income parents continue to be ineligible for public coverage. In 2008, an estimated 11.9 million parents with children under age 18 lacked health insurance coverage, although rates of uninsured parents vary dramatically by state, from a low of 4 percent in Massachusetts to a high of 33 percent in Texas.[17] Studies show that when parents lack health coverage, their children are also less likely to get regular medical care.[18]

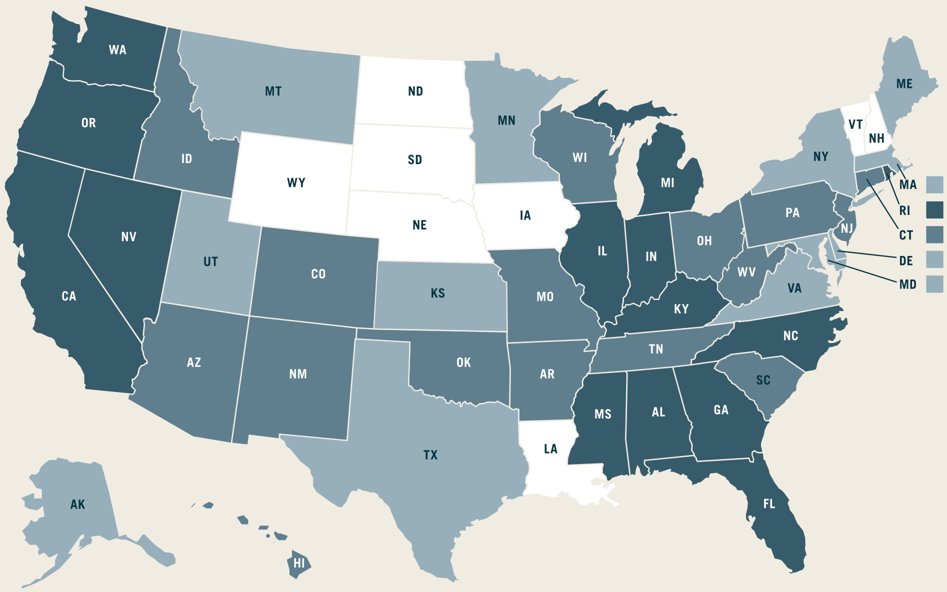
Growing Economic Insecurity and Declining Opportunity

A gradual erosion of economic security over the past 30 years exacerbated the downturn's toll on children and families at the lower half of the income scale, which will make it more difficult for them to recover once the economy has rebounded. Long before the recession, employment was already considerably less stable, and unemployment rates were higher for those without a college degree. Median earnings for workers with only a high school diploma are substantially lower today than a generation ago largely because of the loss of manufacturing jobs that offered family-supporting wages and benefits. Although less dramatic, large numbers of white-collar, middle-income jobs have also disappeared, given globalization and technological development.[19] These middle-income jobs have largely been replaced by either low-wage service jobs that provide little opportunity for advancement or high-wage, high-skill jobs that often require post-graduate education or training.

A gradual erosion of economic security over the past 30 years exacerbated the downturn's toll on children and families at the lower half of the income scale, which will make it more difficult for them to recover once the economy has rebounded.

It now takes two incomes to maintain the same standard of living that a unionized blue-collar worker with only a high school diploma provided for his family a generation ago. At the same time, families face increased costs for child care and transportation since most parents are in the labor force. The decline in employer-sponsored health insurance required many families to absorb high insurance costs themselves or go without insurance altogether. Squeezed financially, struggling families have had little left over to save, and many have accumulated enormous debt.[20] All of these trends have left low- and middle-income families with few buffers against the hardship of a deep recession, making the road to recovery far steeper.

Percent of Children With at Least One Unemployed Parent by State: 2010



5 to 7 | 8 to 9 | 10 to 11 | 12 to 16

Rank	State	Rate
1	North Dakota	5
2	Nebraska	6
2	South Dakota	6
4	Iowa	7
4	Louisiana	7
4	New Hampshire	7
4	Vermont	7
4	Wyoming	7
9	Maryland	8
9	Montana	8
9	Utah	8
12	Alaska	9
12	Delaware	9
12	Kansas	9
12	Maine	9
12	Massachusetts	9
12	Minnesota	9
12	New York	9
12	Texas	9
12	Virginia	9
21	Arkansas	10
21	Connecticut	10
21	Hawaii	10
21	Idaho	10
21	New Jersey	10
21	Oklahoma	10
21	Pennsylvania	10
21	West Virginia	10
21	Wisconsin	10
30	Arizona	11
30	Colorado	11
30	Missouri	11
30	New Mexico	11
30	Ohio	11
30	South Carolina	11
30	Tennessee	11
37	Alabama	12
37	Florida	12
37	Georgia	12
37	Michigan	12
37	Mississippi	12
37	North Carolina	12
37	Washington	12
44	California	13
44	Illinois	13
44	Indiana	13
44	Kentucky	13
44	Oregon	13
49	Rhode Island	14
50	Nevada	16
N.R.	District of Columbia	15
N.R.	Puerto Rico	N.A.

N.R. Not Ranked.
N.A. Not Available.
SOURCE Population Reference Bureau analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS Basic Monthly Data 2007–2010). Individuals are counted as unemployed only if they are actively seeking paid employment; figures do not include stay-at-home parents.
See Definitions and Data Sources, page 68.

Economic mobility spurs innovation, entrepreneurship, and overall rates of economic growth. Many of the remarkable gains in opportunity that our country achieved in the latter half of the 20th century have begun to erode or are in jeopardy.

42 percent

In this country, children born to parents in the lowest fifth of the income scale are likely (42 percent) to end up there as adults.

The quintessential American Dream that hard work will lead to greater opportunity and a steady climb up the economic ladder has become increasingly challenging to achieve for families at the bottom of the income scale. In fact, economic mobility in the United States is lower than in Canada and many European countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, and France.[21]

In this country, children born to parents in the lowest fifth of the income scale are likely (42 percent) to end up there as adults. Similarly, children of parents in the highest income group are likely to stay there (39 percent). African-American families have found upward mobility especially difficult to sustain. Fully 45 percent of black children whose parents were solidly middle income end up falling to the bottom of the income distribution, compared with only 16 percent of white children.[22]

One reason that African-American families are more vulnerable to downward mobility has to do with the wealth gap: White and black families of similar income levels have vastly different amounts of assets, such as savings, home equity, life insurance, and stocks and bonds. Assets can soften the blow of unemployment or other disruptions to family income and can protect families from accumulating debt in the event of serious illness or other type of crisis. In short, all families need assets to sustain hard-won gains in income from one generation to the next.

A society that provides the opportunity for individuals to excel based on their own talents and efforts isn't just a cherished national ideal. Economic mobility spurs innovation, entrepreneurship, and overall rates of economic growth. Many of the remarkable gains in opportunity that our country achieved in the latter half of the 20th century—opportunities that provided pathways from poverty to the middle class—have begun to erode or are in jeopardy. Good jobs with a chance for advancement were once plentiful for hard-working high school graduates, but have now largely dried up.

Although a college degree greatly increases the chance of moving up the economic ladder, a four-year diploma is increasingly out of reach for low-income young people. Tuition costs have skyrocketed at the same time that financial aid policies have made it more difficult for students with financial need to access college.[23] As we work to restore our economy to its full potential, restoring opportunity for all should be a priority.

THE PATH TOWARD ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

TWO-GENERATION STRATEGIES

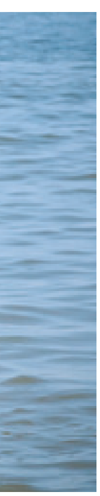
Two-generation strategies to promote children's success:

- Help parents put their families on a path to economic success, and
- Enhance children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development from birth.

Although there are differing opinions about how to solve our nation's fiscal problems, few would disagree that strengthening our economy and reducing America's debt for the long term cannot happen without adequate investment in the education, health, and social well-being of our children. Nobel Laureate James Heckman argues that achieving better outcomes for children is the single most effective way to create greater productivity and prosperity.[24]

Research makes clear the high price we pay if we fail to act in the best interests of the next generation. Even before the recession, child and youth poverty cost an estimated $500 billion a year in reduced economic output, higher health expenditures, and increased criminal justice costs.[25] Those costs are undoubtedly higher today, given the increase in economic hardship during the past three years.[26] The true costs, however, reach far beyond dollars wasted. Without making smart investments to give all children the opportunity to reach their full potential, we can expect to see an erosion in economic mobility and the weakening of our nation's competitiveness in the global marketplace.

The Casey Foundation believes that providing the opportunity for all children to succeed requires two-generation strategies that simultaneously help parents put their families on a path to economic success *and* enhance children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development from birth. Reducing the amount of time children are exposed to economic hardship and investing in their early childhood and early elementary years can provide children with a foundation for later success, including high school graduation, post-secondary education and training, and a successful transition to adulthood. As discussed below, two-generation strategies are vital to reducing socioeconomic and racial/ethnic disparities that affect children's life chances.



In this section, we review some of the research that underlies the Casey Foundation's two-generation approach. We also identify public policies the Foundation believes will make a critical difference to children and families, while propelling our nation toward greater economic strength and fiscal health.

18 months

At age four, children who live in very low-income families are 18 months behind the developmental norm for their age, and by age 10, the gap is still present.

Family Economic Success: Children Succeed When Parents Succeed

To help children grow into successful, productive adults, parents need good jobs with good incomes, stable housing, affordable child care and health care, and enough assets to build a more prosperous future.

What the Research Says. We have a tremendous amount of knowledge not only about how economic hardship affects children, but also about how to lessen harm. Research over the past two decades has consistently shown that ongoing exposure to economic stress and hardship harms children primarily through two mechanisms: decreased parental investments in children and high levels of parental stress. When parents are unemployed or their incomes are low, they may struggle to meet their children's most basic needs—food, safe housing, medical care, and quality child care. They may be unable to provide books, toys, and activities that are developmentally enriching. Inadequate family income and economic uncertainty also increase parental stress, which, in turn, can cause depression and anxiety and increase the risk of substance abuse and domestic violence, all of which can compromise successful parenting.[27]

Economic hardship poses the greatest risk to children when they are young. A child's earliest years, especially from birth to age three, are formative. Children's brains are developing rapidly, and the quality of their early relationships and environments can have lasting effects on their later development.[28] As a result, cognitive, social, and behavioral gaps among children of different socioeconomic backgrounds are evident early on and will persist without intervention. For example, at age four, children who live in very low-income families are 18 months behind the developmental norm for their age, and by age 10, the gap is still present.[29]

Nearly two decades of research shows that increasing family income can positively affect child development, especially for younger children. Experimental studies of temporary assistance programs offer some of the strongest evidence to date about the importance of income.[30] For example, programs that increase family income through employment and earnings supplements have consistently shown improvements in school achievement among elementary school-age children; other studies have also shown links between increased income and improved school readiness in young children. By contrast, programs that increase levels of employment without increasing income have shown few consistent effects on children. Other studies have shown links between increased income and reductions in behavioral problems in low-income children and youth.[31]

Whereas a basic level of income enables parents to provide for their children's essential needs, savings, homeownership, and other assets give parents the ability to offer their children a better future. A large body of research finds a consistent positive relationship between assets—specifically, total net worth and liquid assets, such as savings and

To help children grow into successful, productive adults, parents need good jobs with good incomes, stable housing, affordable child care and health care, and enough assets to build a more prosperous future.

mutual funds—and academic achievement in grade school and college attendance and completion.[32] Research suggests that assets improve outcomes for children through several mechanisms. By helping families weather temporary economic hardships, such as job loss, high medical bills, or family breakup, savings and other liquid assets reduce parental stress and may improve parenting. Assets also provide parents with the financial wherewithal to invest in their children's education. Finally, savings and asset accumulation reinforce and may help create a more forward-looking, future orientation in parents and children alike.[33] In short, helping families accumulate assets can increase their long-term financial stability, improve economic mobility, and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in children's chances for success.[34]

Public Policies That Work. Nearly half (46 percent) of all children under age three—approximately 6 million infants and toddlers—were living in low-income families in 2009.[35] With their futures at risk and our long-term national interests at stake, policymakers should have a great sense of urgency about supporting family economic success. Based on our work and experience, the Casey Foundation recommends the following strategies.

Continue to address the short-term effects of the economic crisis by strengthening and modernizing Unemployment Insurance and promoting foreclosure prevention and remediation efforts.

Strengthen Unemployment Insurance. Few experiences are as difficult and frightening for a family—and the children in that family—as an extended period of unemployment for one of the primary breadwinners. Given stubbornly high unemployment, including significant increases in long-term joblessness, Unemployment Insurance (UI) remains an important resource for parents who must meet their families' basic needs while they search for work.

Federal funding of benefit extensions for workers who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks has provided fiscal relief for states and continues to stimulate the economy. But the current extension is scheduled to expire at the end of 2011, and there are disagreements about what should happen if unemployment remains high. Even with federal support, state unemployment funds have been exhausted, forcing at least 30 states to borrow from the federal UI trust fund. Some economists caution that requiring increased employer contributions to shore up state funds would discourage job creation and that further federal borrowing to fund additional UI benefit extensions is unwise.

Others have argued that to prevent steep cuts in benefits, steps are needed to restructure the financing of state UI trust funds in ways that will not only replenish them, but also restore their long-term health.

Our concern in this essay is with the well-being of children as families weather tough times, so we shall not enter the specific debates about UI financing. But since ample evidence supports the need for economic security throughout a child's development, we believe that it will be advisable to extend UI benefits for the long-term unemployed beyond the end of the year if the unemployment rate has not significantly improved.

6.6 million

In 2001, the Earned Income Tax Credit lifted 6.6 million Americans, half of them children, above the federal poverty line.

2.3 million

The Child Tax Credit lifted 2.3 million people above the federal poverty line in 2009, including about 1.3 million children.

Prevent foreclosure. The mortgage foreclosure crisis is far from over, and losing a home is one of the most stressful crises children can experience. However, states can adopt a number of simple and low-cost solutions to help smooth the road for families faced with foreclosure. For example, states can enact legislation to make foreclosure mediation mandatory, to avoid foreclosure if at all possible and potentially allow the family to stay in the home. States can also pass laws to make temporary federal tenant protections permanent so that renters living in properties at risk of foreclosure do not automatically lose their lease. Finally, states should ensure that those facing foreclosure understand their rights by increasing funding for legal aid programs and partnering with bar associations for pro bono foreclosure assistance.

Help struggling families make ends meet by preserving and strengthening existing programs that supplement poverty-level wages, offset the high cost of child care, and provide health insurance coverage for parents and children.

Expand tax credits. The refundable Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has consistently proved to be one of our nation's most effective anti-poverty programs for families with children. In 2001, the EITC lifted 6.6 million Americans, half of them children, above the federal poverty line. In 23 states and four localities, state EITCs supplement the federal credit, pushing more families out of poverty and helping near-poor families make ends meet. Not only does the EITC allow low-wage workers to keep more of what they earn, but research shows that it also increases work effort. Although much smaller and only partially refundable, the Child Tax Credit lifted 2.3 million people above the federal poverty line in 2009, including about 1.3 million children. These valuable tax credits should be preserved and, once state economies recover, should be expanded.

Not only does the EITC allow low-wage workers to keep more of what they earn, but research shows that it also increases work effort. This valuable tax credit should be preserved and, once state economies recover, should be expanded.

Strengthen Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. SNAP benefits are another essential resource for families facing economic hard times. Not only do these benefits help parents keep their children from going hungry, but they are also typically spent within two weeks, putting the money right back into the economy. Efforts aimed at cutting funding or making fundamental structural changes to SNAP could potentially harm millions of vulnerable children and their families. Furthermore, we should ensure that SNAP benefits are sufficient to enable children and families to have enough food to last throughout the month.

Target child care assistance to those most in need. Due to limited funding, only a fraction of low-income families receive help paying for child care. Reliable, high-quality care is essential, both for parents to be able to work and as a vital support for children's early development. One way to direct more funds to child care subsidies for low-income families, which are funded through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), is to restrict the child care tax credit to low- and moderate-income families—it currently has no income limit—and redirect the savings

to the CCDF block grant. Research on child care subsidies suggests that they can help stabilize employment and increase family self-sufficiency.[36]

Make health care affordable. Although states have done a good job overall of using Medicaid and SCHIP to provide health insurance coverage for children, 7.7 million children remain uninsured, along with nearly 12 million parents with children under age 18. States are beginning to develop strategies to bridge these coverage gaps, while meeting the needs of their communities. As they struggle with the political and fiscal challenges of implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, policymakers should not lose sight of the most important goal: making sure children and families that have struggled to afford coverage finally have the support they need to stay healthy and strong. Large out-of-pocket health care expenses can be devastating to low-income families, but can also destabilize families that are otherwise economically secure. In fact, high medical costs are the leading cause of bankruptcy among middle-income families.

Ensure access to benefits. By streamlining enrollment and eligibility procedures, states can both improve families' access to benefits and achieve cost savings through administrative efficiencies. For example, consolidating application forms to include SNAP benefits, Medicaid, SCHIP, and TANF would reduce duplication of effort. Louisiana implemented an innovative "express-lane eligibility" approach to enroll more than 10,000 children literally overnight in SCHIP by comparing SNAP and SCHIP databases. Also, model programs offer ways to deliver services more efficiently. For example, the Casey Foundation's Centers for Working Families and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's (LISC) Financial Opportunity Centers act as one-stop shops for a range of supports, including assistance applying for benefits, job training, and financial literacy and asset programs.

Promote savings, protect assets, and help families gain financial knowledge and skills.

Encourage savings. Policies that help people access good financial products can provide safe mechanisms for saving. For example, commercial banks are required to provide basic banking accounts, which give families access to affordable banking products that help them manage their money. One pilot program targets low- and moderate-income individuals nationwide who lack access to traditional banking services. Under the program, federal tax refunds are delivered electronically to prepaid debit cards rather than issued as a check, which is more likely to be cashed and spent. Programs like this save money for the federal government by eliminating the costs involved in issuing government checks and should be adopted nationally.

Protect assets. Another inexpensive but high-return program is the regulation of high-cost credit products like payday loans,

7.7 million

7.7 million children remain uninsured, along with nearly 12 million parents with children under age 18.

which trap families in a cycle of debt and prevent them from building a good credit history. Several states have adopted policies to regulate payday loans.

Enhancing Children's Development Means Starting Early

Establishing a sturdy foundation for children's healthy growth and development begins before birth and continues into the early elementary school years. With a strong foundation in place, it is much easier to keep children on track to stay in school and graduate, pursue post-secondary education and training, and successfully transition to young adulthood.

What the Research Says. It's clear from research that various aspects of a child's earliest development—physical growth and health, social and emotional well-being, cognitive development and language acquisition—are intimately connected. Young children's health is the foundation of their overall development, and making sure they are born healthy is the first step toward increasing the life chances of children born to economically distressed parents.

One of the most important insights to emerge from child development research is that emotional development and academic learning are far more closely intertwined in the early years than previously understood.[37] Children who are nurtured and well cared for in the first five years have better social-emotional, language, and learning outcomes. These, in turn, lead to more positive behavior and academic achievement in the early school years.[38] But parents struggling with financial hardship are more prone to stress, anxiety, and depression, which can interfere with effective parenting.[39] These findings underscore the importance of two-generation strategies that mitigate families' underlying economic distress and address the well-being of both parents and children.

A vast body of research shows that high-quality early childhood development programs for disadvantaged children and their families are one of the most cost-effective investments for reducing the harmful effects of economic hardship. These programs include an array of home visiting and parenting support programs for families with infants and toddlers and comprehensive pre-kindergarten programs for three- and four-year-olds. Hundreds of research studies provide definitive evidence that high-quality pre-K for at-risk kids helps narrow the achievement gap, reduces grade repetition and special education placements, increases high school graduation rates, reduces crime, and leads to greater employment and higher earnings among adults. These positive outcomes can reduce the cost of remediation and failure, while fueling the nation's economic growth and productivity.[40]

Although it is costly to provide the quality, intensity, and scale of services necessary to ensure long-term positive effects, early childhood education programs are not an all-or-nothing proposition. Evaluations of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs and Head Start show some positive and meaningful effects on children's school readiness that last through kindergarten and beyond, depending on the program. Although the impact of state and federal programs is smaller when compared to intensive experimental programs, their reach is far greater. With so many children falling behind, investing in effective early childhood programs is essential to increasing the capacity and productivity of our workforce and assuring our global competitiveness.[41]

Finally, research indicates that proficiency in reading in third grade is a crucial marker in a child's educational development. Children who fail to read proficiently by the end of third grade are more likely to drop out of high school, reducing their earning potential and chances for success. Last year, KIDS COUNT released a special report, *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, which explores approaches for helping children reach this key milestone.[42]

Public Policies That Work. The Casey Foundation supports a comprehensive approach to increasing opportunity for children that begins before birth by promoting responsible parenthood and prenatal care for pregnant women. This positive start is complemented by a coherent system of early care and learning through third grade, with a sharp focus on childhood literacy, which can help children succeed in the later years. The following recommendations will help us reach those goals.

Provide children with the best possible start in life by promoting responsible parenthood and ensuring that mothers-to-be receive prenatal care.

Promote healthy marriage. Research shows that children do better when they grow up in an intact two-parent family, both in terms of economic well-being and longer term outcomes, such as higher secondary school and college graduation. They are also less likely to become teen parents.[43] Similarly, we know that the presence of an engaged, supportive, and responsible father contributes to positive child outcomes.[44] In 2002, the Bush administration initiated a number of important efforts to support healthy and stable marriage and fatherhood. Part of their focus was on results: funding research and evaluation of programs using gold-standard designs to help understand what works. Unfortunately, the early results of the demonstration efforts have been mixed and inconclusive, with just one site showing a positive effect.[45] Still, these healthy marriage initiatives are new, and many successful social policy efforts take years of innovation and adjustments to find an approach or model that generates benefits for recipients. Therefore, we recommend that both the federal government and the states continue to find ways to remove barriers and disincentives to marriage and thoughtfully support two committed, married parents as the best environment to raise children. At the same time, efforts should continue to evaluate different approaches for achieving this objective. Finally, we urge leaders in both the public and private spheres to help promote a culture that supports healthy marriage and relationships, as well as responsible fatherhood.

Prevent teen pregnancy. Countless studies show that teen parents and their children are at high risk for dropping out of school, remaining single parents, and living in poverty, leading to diminished economic prospects for two generations and increased reliance on public benefits.[46] Although there was a brief uptick in teen pregnancy earlier in the decade, reductions in teen pregnancy

High-quality pre-K for at-risk kids helps narrow the achievement gap, reduces grade repetition and special education placements, increases high school graduation rates, reduces crime, and leads to greater employment and higher earnings among adults.

Not all parenting support programs are effective, however, so policymakers need to take advantage of growing research in this area and adopt program models with a proven record of positive results.

$9 billion

Teen childbearing in the United States costs taxpayers an estimated $9 billion a year.

67 percent

There was an increase of 67 percent between 2002 and 2009 in the number of four-year-olds enrolled in state pre-K programs.

and births to teens over the past two decades have been dramatic. Despite these improvements, teen childbearing in the United States costs taxpayers an estimated $9 billion a year.[47] Policymakers need to adopt and expand programs that will ensure further progress. For instance, Congress should maintain federal funding for the Evidence-Based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative. Also, states can apply for funding under the Personal Responsibility and Education Program (PREP),[48] which supports the implementation of evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs. Plain Talk, a neighborhood-based initiative of the Casey Foundation that has received PREP funding, helps adults, parents, and community leaders develop the skills and tools to communicate effectively with young people about reducing adolescent sexual risk-taking.

Expand access to prenatal care. The health and well-being of infants and young children is closely tied to the health of their mothers during pregnancy. Despite increased Medicaid/SCHIP eligibility for low-income children, the income cutoff for public health insurance eligibility for pregnant women is less than 200 percent of the poverty line in more than half of the states.[49] States should raise eligibility for pregnant women to the same level as for young children.

Ensure that children are developmentally ready—cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically—to succeed in school.

Provide parenting support. Home visiting and other parenting support programs can improve child outcomes by providing new parents with social support, information about parenting and child development, and referrals to community resources and programs. Such programs can help parents understand the critical role they play as their children's first teachers and in early language acquisition. Not all parenting support programs are effective, however, so policymakers need to take advantage of growing research in this area and adopt program models with a proven record of positive results.[50] For example, home visiting programs vary by intensity (frequency of visits and program duration), type of visitor providing services (training and credentials), and type of services provided.[51] The Nurse–Family Partnership is an example of a successful home visiting program whose positive impacts have been demonstrated through rigorous, multi-site evaluations.[52]

Preserve and expand access to early childhood programs. Recognizing that high-quality pre-K and other early childhood programs are sound investments, most states protected their programs from budget cuts during the recession.[53] An infusion of ARRA funds also preserved Head Start and Early Head Start slots. But with federal funds drying up and states facing larger deficits, early childhood programs are at risk. For example, more than 20 states proposed deep cuts in pre-K and/or K–12 spending for the coming fiscal year.[54] These cuts will jeopardize the tremendous strides states made in pre-K access over the past decade. The number of four-year-olds enrolled in state pre-K programs increased 67 percent between 2002 and 2009.[55] As state economies recover, policymakers should continue to expand these programs and improve their quality. Ten states still do not fund their own pre-K programs.

Prepare children to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by promoting reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

Create a more seamless and integrated system from birth to third grade. Deeper connections between the early childhood and K–12 systems will better serve children and result in increased student achievement. State-level Early Childhood Councils are well suited to work with chief state school officers to develop comprehensive birth to age eight plans for improving third-grade reading. The upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides an opportunity for better coordination by including a set of early learning principles in ESEA. The Common Core State Standards, a national initiative led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, has made tremendous progress in ensuring more consistent expectations for what students should learn in a particular grade and provides an opportunity to expand the approach into early childhood.

Address chronic school absence. Attending school regularly is especially important for children from economically disadvantaged families. Chronic school absence in the early years may be a warning sign of distress at home, school, or both and predicts poor school achievement later on. State funding policies can be used to create incentives for schools to monitor and take proactive steps to increase student attendance. For example, outreach to parents can help them understand the importance of school attendance, even for elementary school students. And, although schools by themselves cannot always solve problems at home that contribute to chronic absence, they can coordinate with relevant public agencies as appropriate. Only a few states currently use incentives to encourage efforts to reduce chronic school absence.[56]

Fight summer learning loss. Summer should be an integral part of a child's education, and policy should support programs that incorporate literacy skills into enriching summer activities. This is particularly important for low-income and minority youth who are over-represented in remedial summer school, but have limited access to programs that have been shown to boost literacy. Summer learning programs should be included in Title I and throughout ESEA as an allowable and recommended use of funds to help states and districts close the achievement gap.

CONCLUSION

Despite the recession's lingering toll, Americans remain an optimistic people. African Americans and Latinos, for instance, are particularly positive about the country's economic future, believing that their children will be better off than they are.[57] The challenge that our nation's leaders face is to turn this hopeful outlook into genuine opportunity and mobility for the next generation.

This is certainly not the first time that America has faced deep economic adversity. In the years following World War II, when deficits were also high, our leaders understood the importance of making investments that would strengthen our future. Policymakers invested in education, homeownership, and the nation's physical infrastructure. Government, employers, and workers forged an implicit social contract that benefited business, families, and society at large. Our nation experienced unprecedented economic opportunity and prosperity, creating the largest and strongest middle class in history.

Much has changed since then, as technological innovation and global competition have transformed our economy. What hasn't changed is the need to keep the next generation healthy, educated, and prepared to compete in an ever-changing world.

We have made tremendous progress in child well-being and reduced some of the most egregious disparities associated with differences in income and wealth, and race and ethnicity. At the same time, some of those hard-won gains are slipping away. We are at risk of losing the energy and effort that is fed by a realistic prospect of doing better than one's parents, of moving up the economic ladder. Our children lag behind those of other countries in math and science preparation and college graduation. Our teen pregnancy rate, though improved, is still the highest in the developed world. Far too many of our children are unprepared to compete effectively in an increasingly technology-driven, high-skill global marketplace.

We can—and must—do better. With sound investments, we can provide all children with the opportunity to reach the full potential of their talents and ambitions, while setting the nation on a path to renewed economic prosperity. It won't be easy, but as a nation, we have the knowledge, tools, and determination to make it happen.

Patrick T. McCarthy
President and CEO
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

ENDNOTES

1. Isaacs, J., Sawhill, I., and Haskins, R. (2008). *Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America*. Economic Mobility Project, Pew Charitable Trusts. www.economicmobility.org/reports_and_research/mobility_in_america

2. Cauthen, N. K., and Fass, S. (2008). *Ten Important Questions About Child Poverty and Family Economic Hardship*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_829.pdf

3. Boushey, H., Brocht, C., Gundersen, B., and Bernstein, J. (2001). *Hardships in America: The Real Story of Working Families*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. www.epi.org/publications/entry/books_hardships/

4. Bernstein, J., Brocht, C., and Spade-Aguilar, M. (2000). *How Much Is Enough? Basic Family Budgets for Working Families*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. www.epi.org/publications/entry/books_howmuch/

5. Duncan, G. J., and Magnuson, K. (Winter 2011). "The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty." *Pathways Magazine*, pp 22–27. www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/_media/pdf/pathways/winter_2011/PathwaysWinter11_Duncan.pdf

6. Bivens, J. (April 28, 2011). *GDP Picture: First Quarter Growth Dips, Suggesting Higher Unemployment to Come*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. www.epi.org/publications/entry/gdp_picture_first_quarter_growth_dips_suggesting_higher_unemployment

7. As of May 2011. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (June 3, 2011). "The Employment Situation–May 2011." New Release. www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf

8. Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?ind=47

9. U.S. Department of Labor. (November 16, 2010). "Summary: The Role of Unemployment as an Automatic Stabilizer During a Recession." News Release. www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/eta20101615fs.htm

10. First Focus. (2009). *Children's Budget 2009*. Washington, DC: Author. www.firstfocus.net/sites/default/files/Childrens_budget_2009_book.pdf

11. Yeung, W. J., and Conley, D. (2008). "Black–White Achievement Gap and Family Wealth." *Child Development*, 79(2), pp. 303–324. Aaronson, D. (2000). "A Note on the Benefits of Homeownership." *Journal of Urban Economics*, 47, pp. 356–369.

12. The figure refers to children affected by "foreclosure starts," that is, loans on which foreclosure actions have been taken. Population Reference Bureau's analysis of data from the Mortgage Bankers Association's (MBA) National Delinquency Survey (NDS).

13. Weller, C. E., Fields, J., and Agbede, F. (January 2011). *The State of Communities of Color in the U.S. Economy: A Snapshot as We Enter 2011*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/01/pdf/comm_of_color.pdf

14. Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?ind=71

15. Analysis of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) by Compass Economics.

16. Hernandez, D. J. (2011). *Declining Fortunes of Children in Middle-Class Families: Economic Inequality and Child Well-Being in the 21st Century*. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development. www.fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/2011%20Declining%20Fortunes_0.pdf

17. Population Reference Bureau analysis of the American Community Survey.

18. Davidoff, A., Dubay, L., Kenney, G., and Yemane, A. (2003). "The Effect of Parents' Insurance Coverage on Access to Care for Low-Income Children." *Inquiry*, 40(3), pp. 254–268.

19. Bernhardt, A., Boushey, H., Dresser, L., and Tilly, C. (2008). *The Gloves-Off Economy: Workplace Standards at the Bottom of America's Labor Market*. Champaign, IL: Labor and Employment Relations Series.

20. Warren, E., and Tyagi, A. W. (2003). *The Two-Income Trap: Why Middle-Class Mothers and Fathers Are Going Broke*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

21. Haskins, R., and Sawhill, I. (2009). *Creating An Opportunity Society*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

22. Isaacs, J., Sawhill, I., and Haskins, R. (2008). *Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America*. Economic Mobility Project, Pew Charitable Trusts. www.economicmobility.org/reports_and_research/mobility_in_america

23. Cauthen, N. K., and Orozco, V. (October 26, 2009). "The High Cost of Working Hard: Why Students Need to Work Less and Study More." *The American Prospect*. http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_high_cost_of_working_hard

24. Heckman, J. (September 1, 2010). Letter to the National Committee on Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Reform. www.heckmanequation.org/system/files/Federal-Commision_9-1-2010FINAL%20_3_.pdf

25. Holtzer, H. J., Schanzenbach, D. W., Duncan, G. J., and Ludwig, J. (2007). *The Economic Costs of Poverty in the United States: Subsequent Effects of Children Growing Up Poor*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/01/pdf/poverty_report.pdf

26. Holzer, H. J. (2010). *Penny Wise, Pound Foolish: Why Tackling Child Poverty During the Great Recession Makes Economic Sense*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress and Half in Ten. www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/09/pdf/hit_childpoverty.pdf

27. Yeung, W. J., Linver, M. R., and Brooks-Gunn, J. (2002). "How Money Matters for Children's Development: Parental Investment and Family Processes." *Child Development*, 73(6), pp. 1861–1879.

28. Shonkoff, J. P., and Phillips, D. A. (eds.). (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

29. Klein, L. G., and Knitzer, J. (2007). *Promoting Effective Early Learning: What Every Policymaker and Educator Should Know*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University.

30. For an overview of this research, see Cauthen, N. K. (2002). *Policies That Improve Family Income Matter for Children*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_480.pdf

31. Costello, E. J., Compton, S., Keeler, G., Angold, A. (2003). "Relationships Between Poverty and Psychopathology: A Natural Experiment." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 290(15), pp. 2023–2029.

32. Elliott, W., Destin, M., and Friedline, T. (2011). *Taking Stock of Ten Years of Research on the Relationship Between Assets and Children's Educational Outcomes: Implications for Theory, Policy and Intervention*. St. Louis, MO: Center for Social Development, Washington University. http://csd.wustl.edu/Publications/Documents/WP11-08.pdf

33. Sherraden, M. (1991). *Assets and the Poor: A New American Welfare Policy*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.

34. Lui, M. (2009). *Laying the Foundation for National Prosperity: The Imperative of Closing the Racial Wealth Gap*. Oakland, CA: Insight Center for Community and Economic Development.

35. Chau, M., Thampi, K., and Wight, V. R. (2010). *Basic Facts About Low-Income Children, 2009: Children Under Age 3*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_971.pdf

36. Forry, N., and Hofferth, S. L. (2010). "Maintaining Work: The Influence of Child Care Subsidies on Child Care-Related Work Disruptions." *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(3), pp. 346–368. Acs, G., Loprest, P., and Ratcliffe, C. (2010). *Progress Toward Self-Sufficiency for Low-Wage Workers*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

37. Shonkoff, J. P., and Phillips, D. A. (eds.). (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

38. Higgins, L. B., Stagman, S., and Smith, S. (2010). *Improving Supports for Parents of Young Children: State-Level Initiatives*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_966.pdf

39. Knitzer, J., Theberge, S., and Johnson, K. (2008). *Reducing Maternal Depression and Its Impact on Young Children: Toward a Responsive Early Childhood Policy Framework*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_791.pdf

40. Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., and White, B. A. (2009). "Cost-Effective Early Childhood Development Programs: A Synthesis of Evidence in the First Decade of Life." *Encyclopedia of Education*.

41. Ibid.

42. Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*. KIDS COUNT Special Report. Baltimore, MD: Author. www.aecf.org/~/media/Pubs/Initiatives/KIDS%20COUNT/123/2010KCSpecReport/AEC_report_color_highres.pdf

43. McLanahan, S., and Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing Up With a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

44. Smeeding, T. M., Garfinkel, I., and Mincy, R. B. (May 2011). *Young Disadvantaged Men: Fathers, Families, Poverty, and Policy*. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 635.

45. Wood, R., McConnell, S., Moore, Q., Clarkwest, A., and Hsueh, J. (May 2010). "Strengthening Unmarried Parents' Relationships: The Early Impacts of Building Strong Families." Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research.

46. Terry-Humen, E., Manlove, J., and Moore, K. A. (2005). *Playing Catch-Up: How Children Born to Teen Mothers Fare*. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/pubs/PlayingCatchUp.pdf

47. Estimate based on data from 2004. See www.thenationalcampaign.org/costs/

48. For more information, see www.amchp.org/Advocacy/health-reform/Documents/PREP%20Tip%20Sheet.pdf

49. Ross, D. C., Jarlenski, M., Artiga, S., and Marks, C. (2009). *A Foundation for Health Reform: Findings of a 50-State Survey of Eligibility Rules, Enrollment and Renewal Procedures, and Cost-Sharing Practices in Medicaid and CHIP for Children and Parents During 2009*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. www.kff.org/medicaid/upload/8028.pdf

50. Kahn, J., and Moore, K. A. (2010). *What Works for Home Visiting Programs: Lessons From Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions*. Washington, DC: Child Trends. www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2010_7_1_FS_WWHomeVisitpdf.pdf

51. Higgins, L. B., Stagman, S., and Smith, S. (2010). *Improving Supports for Parents of Young Children: State-Level Initiatives*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_966.pdf

52. For citations to evaluation research on the Nurse–Family Partnership program, see www.nursefamilypartnership.org/proven-results/published-research

53. www.preknow.org/votescount/

54. Leachman, M., Williams, E., and Johnson, N. (March 2011). *Governors Are Proposing Further Deep Cuts in Services, Likely Harming Their Economies: Less-Harmful Alternatives Include Revenue Increases and Rainy Day Funds*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=3389

55. Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters. KIDS COUNT Special Report*. Baltimore, MD: Author. www.aecf.org/~/media/Pubs/Initiatives/KIDS%20COUNT/123/2010KCSpecReport/AEC_report_color_highres.pdf

56. Chang, H. N., and Romero, M. (2008). *Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_837.pdf

57. Craighill, P. M. (February 22, 2011). "Race and Recession Poll: African Americans Big on Optimism." *Washington Post*. Also see www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/20/AR2011022000005.html

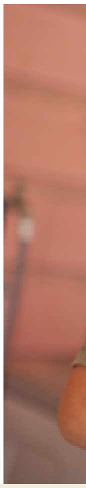
Family Stories

MANUEL LUNA San Antonio, Texas

"It broke me down, emotionally and mentally, that I couldn't provide for my family. We'd never been in a situation like this before."

Today, Manuel Luna has a good full-time job with benefits to support his wife and four young children. But he remembers well the financial and emotional toll of being unemployed for almost five months after losing his job in 2009—a time he calls "our depression."

Angry and despondent after losing his role as the family breadwinner, Manuel Luna attended anger management classes and family counseling. The family found resources and service providers through the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Making Connections* program and the Casey-supported Center for Working Families, which serves low-income families.



"It broke me down, emotionally and mentally, that I couldn't provide for my family. We'd never been in a situation like this before," admits Luna. Counseling "helped build my confidence back" and it eased his wife's anxiety and "helped us as a family, bringing us more closely together."

He credits the help he received from several programs with pulling his family through. The Earned Income Tax Credit provided extra cash to help the family catch up on bills and pay off debts. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (formerly food stamps) and the San Antonio Food Bank not only helped feed his family, but also freed up money to buy other essentials, like school uniforms and shoes. The Energy Assistance Program helped pay for utilities, which allowed other money to pay such bills as the rent.

"Right now, we're stable," says Luna, 31, who has worked since September 2010 as a utility technician for the city's public water system and, before that, in a restaurant warehouse. "But we really went through a hard time. The programs helped us."

The Lunas also tapped into financial education programs to improve their credit and work toward qualifying for an Individual Development Account to save for college and to buy a home. Luna's wife Hilda Laura, 29, a stay-at-home mother, decided to start vocational training and will soon earn a cosmetology degree.

After their financial and emotional health improved, Manuel and Hilda Laura Luna plunged into community activities. Manuel has served as a PTA president and coached his children's sports teams. The couple has been involved in a neighborhood improvement group and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

"I am better off than I was before I got laid off. I was working a lot and wasn't spending much time with my wife and kids," says Luna. "The counseling and anger management helped me see what I really was missing. I'm working a good job. My wife is happy. I'm spending more time with my kids. For all the little things that I have, I am happy."

Practical Solutions

Helping families to weather tough employment setbacks with temporary benefits, combined with financial literacy and other counseling services, can lessen the economic and emotional toll and put them on a more solid path to success.

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Our future success as a nation depends on the degree to which we ensure that all of our children have the opportunity to thrive. The broad array of data we present each year in the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is intended to illuminate the status of America's children and to assess trends in their well-being. By updating the assessment every year, KIDS COUNT provides ongoing benchmarks that can be used to see how states have advanced or regressed over time. Readers can also use KIDS COUNT to compare the status of children in their state with those in other states across several dimensions of child well-being.

Although the 10 measures used in KIDS COUNT to rank states can hardly capture the full range of conditions shaping children's lives, we believe these indicators possess three important attributes: (1) They reflect a wide range of factors affecting the well-being of children, such as health, adequacy of income, and educational attainment. (2) They reflect experiences across a range of developmental stages—from birth through early adulthood. (3) They permit legitimate comparisons because they are consistent across states and over time. Research shows that the 10 KIDS COUNT key indicators capture most of the yearly variation in child well-being reflected in other indices that utilize a much larger number of indicators. For more information about the criteria used to select KIDS COUNT indicators, see page 71.

The 10 indicators used to rank states reflect a developmental perspective on childhood and underscore our goal to build a world where pregnant women and newborns thrive; infants and young children receive the support they need to enter school prepared to learn; children succeed in school; adolescents choose healthy behaviors; and young people experience a successful transition into adulthood. In all of these stages of development, young people need the economic and social assistance provided by a strong family and a supportive community.

As the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* has developed over time, some of the indicators used to rank states have changed because we replaced weaker measures with stronger ones. Consequently, comparing rankings in the 2011 *Data Book* to rankings in past *Data Books* does not always provide a perfect assessment of change over time. However, the Appendix (see page 64) shows how states would have ranked in past years if we had employed the same 10 measures used in the 2011 *Data Book*. The table in the Appendix is the best way to assess state changes over time in overall child well-being.

This year's *Data Book* is also accompanied by the KIDS COUNT Data Center, available at datacenter.kidscount.org. It provides easy online access to hundreds of additional indicators on children and youth for the United States as a whole, as well as for individual states, cities, counties, congressional districts, and school districts across the country.

National Trends in Child Well-Being

The data on the following pages present a rich but complex picture of American children. After showing improvement in the late 1990s, overall child well-being has stagnated since 2000 (see Table 1). At the national level, 5 of the 10 indicators of child well-being showed that conditions improved since 2000, while child well-being worsened on 3 indicators. The survey tool for 2 indicators, the percent of teens not attending school and not working and the percent of children in families where no parent works full time, year-round, was significantly changed in 2008. Therefore, data cannot be compared to previous years. However, it should be noted that both indicators worsened between 2008 and 2009.

The portrait of change in child well-being since 2000 stands in stark contrast to

TABLE 1

10 Key Indicators of Child Well-Being, National Average: 2000 and 2007/2008/2009

Key Indicators		2000	2007/2008/2009	PERCENT CHANGE
Percent low-birthweight babies	2008	7.6	8.2	8.0
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	2007	6.9	6.8	–1
Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14)	2007	22	19	–14
Teen death rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19)	2007	67	62	–7
Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15–19)	2008	48	41	–15
Percent of teens not in school and not high school graduates (ages 16–19)	2009	11	6	–45
Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16–19)	2009	N.A.	9	—
Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment	2009	N.A.	31	—
Percent of children in poverty (income below $21,756 for a family of two adults and two children in 2009)	2009	17	20	18
Percent of children in single-parent families	2009	31	34	10

N.A. Comparable data not available for 2000 for these indicators.
See Definitions and Data Sources, page 68.

Since 2000, the child poverty rate has increased by 18 percent, meaning that the economic recession of the past few years effectively wiped out all of the gains we made in cutting child poverty in the late 1990s.

State Profiles

The state and U.S. profiles that were included in previous years, comparing the current year's data to 2000, are now available online; please visit datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011/profiles.

the period just prior to 2000. Between 1996 and 2000, 8 of the 10 key indicators used in KIDS COUNT improved, and several improved dramatically. The improvement was experienced by every major racial group and in nearly all of the states.

Pre- and post-2000 trends are clearly illustrated by changes in the rate of child poverty. Between 1994 and 2000, the child poverty rate fell by nearly 30 percent. This was the largest decrease in child poverty since the 1960s. Since 2000, however, the child poverty rate has increased by 18 percent, meaning that the economic recession of the past few years effectively wiped out all of the gains we made in cutting child poverty in the late 1990s. In 2009, 2.4 million more children lived in poverty than in 2000, and many experts predict that the child poverty rate will continue to increase over the next several years.

Variations in Child Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin

Not all children have the same opportunities to succeed. Some children, particularly children of color, face greater barriers to achieving success as they move through childhood and adolescence. Table 2 provides national statistics for the five largest racial and Hispanic origin groups on each of the 10 measures of child well-being used to rank states. To access state-level data for these racial and Hispanic origin groups for our 10 key indicators, visit the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

Nationally, the differences in child well-being across racial and Hispanic origin lines vary by indicator. Since 2000, gaps in the differences in child well-being along racial and ethnic lines have decreased in some areas—most notably, the high school dropout rate. However, on the whole, non-Hispanic white and Asian and Pacific Islander children continue to have better outcomes on the 10 indicators we track, compared with the other large racial and Hispanic origin groups. Comparative trends and state-level data for the information contained in Table 2 can be found at the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

KIDS COUNT State Indicators

In the pages that follow, data are presented for the 10 key indicators for all states, including state-level maps of each indicator. The state and U.S. profiles that were included in previous years, comparing the current year's data to 2000, are now available online; please visit datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011/profiles.

Table 3 provides a summary of results from this year's *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and highlights the enormous variation among the states. The rates of the worst states are approximately two to four times those of the best states on every indicator.

The importance of reporting state-level data is underscored by the fact that most measures in most states are statistically significantly different from the national value for each measure. In other words, the national value for a measure does not tell you much about most states. Tables showing the statistical significance of differences among states and changes over time are provided at the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

The 10 key indicators of child well-being used here are all derived from federal government statistical agencies and reflect the best available state-level data for tracking yearly changes in each indicator. It should be noted that the National Center for Health Statistics has not updated the infant, child, and teen

TABLE 2

10 Key Indicators of Child Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2007/2008/2009

Key Indicators		National Average	Non-Hispanic White	Black/African American	Asian and Pacific Islander	American Indian and Alaskan Native	Hispanic/Latino
Percent low-birthweight babies	2008	8.2	7.2	13.4	8.2	7.4	7.0
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	2007	6.8	5.6	13.2	3.8	8.7	5.7
Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14)	2007	19	17	27	14	28	18
Teen death rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19)	2007	62	58	83	33	87	58
Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15–19)	2008	41	26	63	16	58	78
Percent of teens not in school and not high school graduates (ages 16–19)	2009	6	4	8	3	13	10
Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16–19)	2009	9	7	13	5	17	12
Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment	2009	31	24	47	22	49	38
Percent of children in poverty (income below $21,756 for a family of two adults and two children in 2009)	2009	20	12	36	13	35	31
Percent of children in single-parent families	2009	34	24	67	16	53	40

NOTE See indicator pages 40–61 for notes on how race is defined.
See Definitions and Data Sources, page 68.

TABLE 3

10 Key Indicators of Child Well-Being, Highest and Lowest Ranking States: 2007/2008/2009

Key Indicators		Highest Ranking Value	Highest Ranking State(s)	Lowest Ranking Value	Lowest Ranking State
Percent low-birthweight babies	2008	6.0	Alaska	11.8	Mississippi
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	2007	4.8	Washington	10.0	Mississippi
Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14)	2007	9	Rhode Island	34	Mississippi
Teen death rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19)	2007	35	Vermont	100	Alaska
Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15–19)	2008	20	Massachusetts, New Hampshire	66	Mississippi
Percent of teens not in school and not high school graduates (ages 16–19)	2009	3	New Hampshire, New Jersey	11	Nevada
Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16–19)	2009	5	New Hampshire	15	West Virginia
Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment	2009	21	North Dakota	39	Mississippi
Percent of children in poverty (income below $21,756 for a family of two adults and two children in 2009)	2009	11	New Hampshire	31	Mississippi
Percent of children in single-parent families	2009	18	Utah	48	Mississippi

See Definitions and Data Sources, page 68.

mortality rates since the publication of the 2010 *Data Book*. Therefore the 2007 data appear for these indicators in the 2011 *Data Book*.

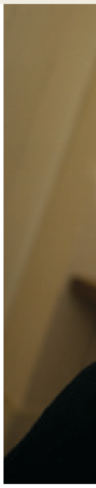
However, it is important to recognize that many of the indicators used here are derived from samples, and like all sample data, they contain some random error. Other measures (the Infant Mortality Rate and the Child Death Rate, for example) are based on relatively small numbers of events in some states and may exhibit some random fluctuation from year to year. We urge readers to focus on relatively large differences—both across states and over time within a state. Small differences, within a state over time or between states, may simply reflect random fluctuations, rather than real changes in the well-being of children. Assessing trends by looking at changes over a longer period of time is more reliable. Historical data for each state are available on the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

We include data for the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico in the *Data Book*, but not in our state rankings. Because they are significantly different from any state, the comparisons are not meaningful. It is more useful to look at changes for these geographies over time, or to compare the District with other large cities. Data for many child well-being indicators for the 50 largest cities (including the District of Columbia) are available at the KIDS COUNT Data Center. Information for the U.S. Virgin Islands was not available in time to be included in this year's publication, but limited information is available on the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* utilizes rates and percentages because that is the best way to compare states to each other and to assess changes over time within a state. However, our focus on rates and percentages may mask the magnitude of some of the problems that are examined in this report. The number of events or number of children reflected in each of the national rates for the 10 key indicators used to rank states are provided on corresponding indicator pages. These data underscore the fact that thousands of children die every year, and millions are at risk because of poverty, family structure, lack of parental employment, or risky behavior.

It is our hope that the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and the accompanying KIDS COUNT Data Center will help raise the visibility of children's issues on the national agenda and serve as a tool for advocates, policymakers, and others to make better decisions. We believe that good data are always needed to develop the most effective policies and practices for children and their families, but they are even more critical at this time in our nation's history, when families are facing economic uncertainties about their future well-being. At the same time, states faced with huge budget shortfalls are making tough decisions about how to deal with lost revenue. It's more important than ever that we use the best data available to monitor the impact of these decisions on the life outcomes for millions of our nation's most vulnerable children.

It is our hope that the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and the accompanying KIDS COUNT Data Center will help raise the visibility of children's issues on the national agenda and serve as a tool for advocates, policymakers, and others to make better decisions.



ROSA HUESTIS Rochester, New Hampshire

At age 20, Vermont native and former foster youth Rosa Huestis had completed high school, enrolled in college, and was getting help covering her housing and education costs, thanks to state assistance and the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. The law offers financial incentives for states to extend services to foster care youth beyond age 18, provided that they take certain steps to help prepare themselves for the workforce.

Without family to rely on, "it would have been hard these last couple of years to do everything I've done on my own," Huestis commented at the time. "If I didn't have the extra funding coming in, there is no way I would have made it. I probably would have ended up dropping out of high school to work full time."

"If I didn't have the extra funding coming in, there is no way I would have made it. I probably would have ended up dropping out of high school to work full time."

Family Stories

Huestis left college and the home she shared with a former foster parent to move in with her boyfriend. She became pregnant and lost her job at a gas station three months before the baby was born. Her boyfriend was laid off from his inventory control job at a warehouse. Homeless for several months, they decided to move to New Hampshire.

They were able to find an apartment there, where they now live with nine-month-old Hunter. Today, they barely squeak by, even with unemployment assistance, as well as health insurance benefits provided by the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development and food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP, formerly food stamps).

"If we didn't have this assistance, it would be impossible to function," says Huestis, now age 22. Hunter had bronchitis as an infant, and "we were constantly in and out of the doctor's office and the hospital," she notes. Without insurance, "the bills would add up and be way more than we could handle." And, with the food assistance, "I don't have to worry about being able to put food on the table."

Huestis had planned to combine her love of horses with a career as a therapist, incorporating horseback riding into therapeutic treatment. "At some point, I want to go back to school. But that's going to have to wait," she says. "We need jobs and more money coming in, but it's hard with both of us trying to find work and find day care within our budget."

Like any parent, Huestis has big dreams for her son. "I want him to be as healthy as possible and to make sure he's got whatever he needs and that he can grow up to be the person he wants to be. I am hoping down the road that when he hits college age, we will be able to help him and support him."

Practical Solutions

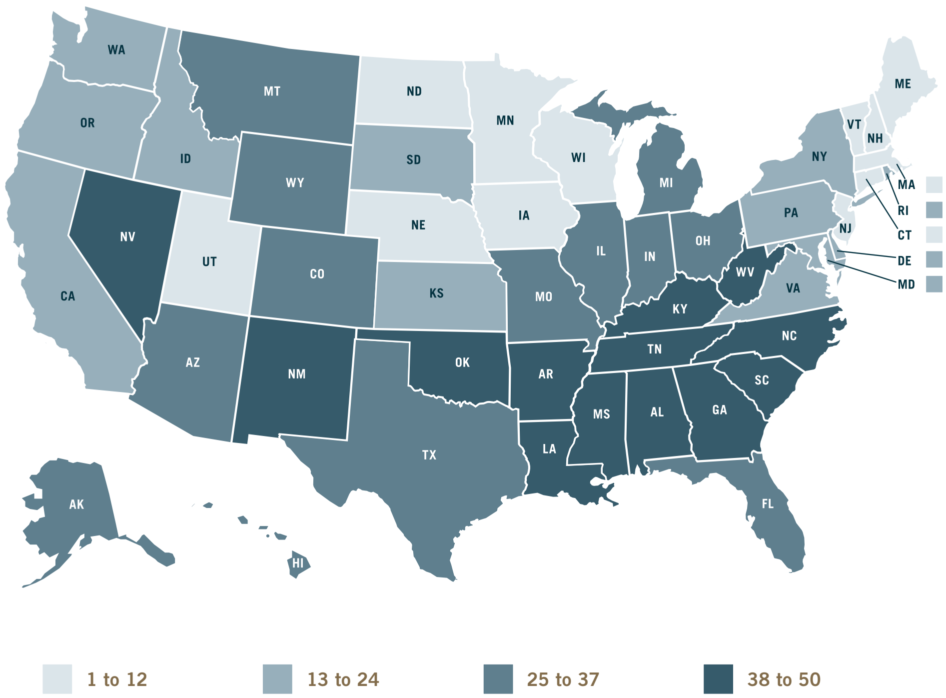
Extending services to foster care youth beyond age 18 helps fill the gaps in basic needs. And, retaining benefits like SNAP puts food on the table *and* money back into the economy.

Ranking States on Composite Index

Data from all 10 key indicators are used to develop a composite index of child well-being for each state. The Overall Rank Table and Map show how states rank, based on the 10-item index. The state that ranks highest (best), based on the composite index, is New Hampshire. Minnesota ranks second, and Massachusetts ranks third. The three states at the bottom of the ranking are Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama.

The Overall Rank Map also reflects some regional overtones. The New England states and a group of states in the Northern Plains all rank relatively high. Except for Maine and Rhode Island, all of the New England states rank in the top 10. In the Northern Plains, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and North Dakota are all ranked in the top 10. At the other end of the spectrum, states in the South (both Southeast and Southwest) and Appalachia dominate the lower part of the ranking. The 10 states with the lowest Overall Rank in terms of child well-being are all located in these regions.

KIDS COUNT Overall Rank: 2011



Rank	State
1	New Hampshire
2	Minnesota
3	Massachusetts
4	Vermont
5	New Jersey
6	Connecticut
7	Utah
8	Iowa
9	Nebraska
10	North Dakota
11	Maine
12	Wisconsin
13	Washington
14	Virginia
15	New York
16	California
17	Rhode Island
18	Oregon
19	Kansas
20	Pennsylvania
21	South Dakota
22	Idaho
23	Maryland
24	Delaware
25	Colorado
26	Hawaii
27	Illinois
28	Wyoming
29	Ohio
30	Michigan
31	Indiana
32	Alaska
33	Montana
34	Missouri
35	Texas
36	Florida
37	Arizona
38	North Carolina
39	Tennessee
40	Nevada
41	Kentucky
42	Georgia
43	Oklahoma
44	West Virginia
45	South Carolina
46	New Mexico
47	Arkansas
48	Alabama
49	Louisiana
50	Mississippi
N.R.	District of Columbia
N.R.	Puerto Rico

N.R. Not Ranked.

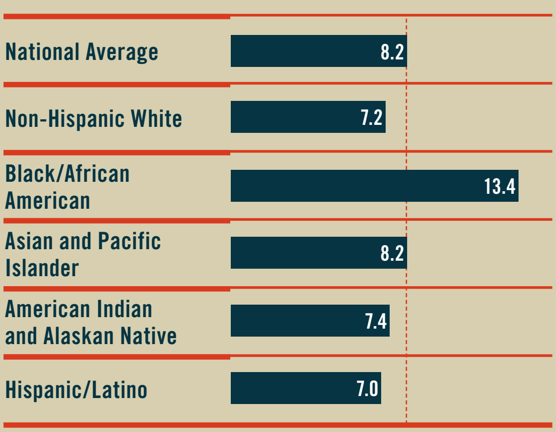
Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Percent Low-Birthweight Babies

The birth of a baby reminds us of the potential that exists in every new generation. Yet, some newborns face stiffer odds than other babies to thrive. Babies weighing less than 2,500 grams (about 5.5 pounds) at birth have a high probability of experiencing developmental problems and short- and long-term disabilities and are at greater risk of dying within the first year of life. Although recent increases in multiple births have strongly influenced the rise in rates of low-birthweight babies, rates have also been higher among singleton deliveries. Smoking, prenatal nutrition, poverty, stress, infections, and violence can increase the risk of a baby being born with low birthweight.

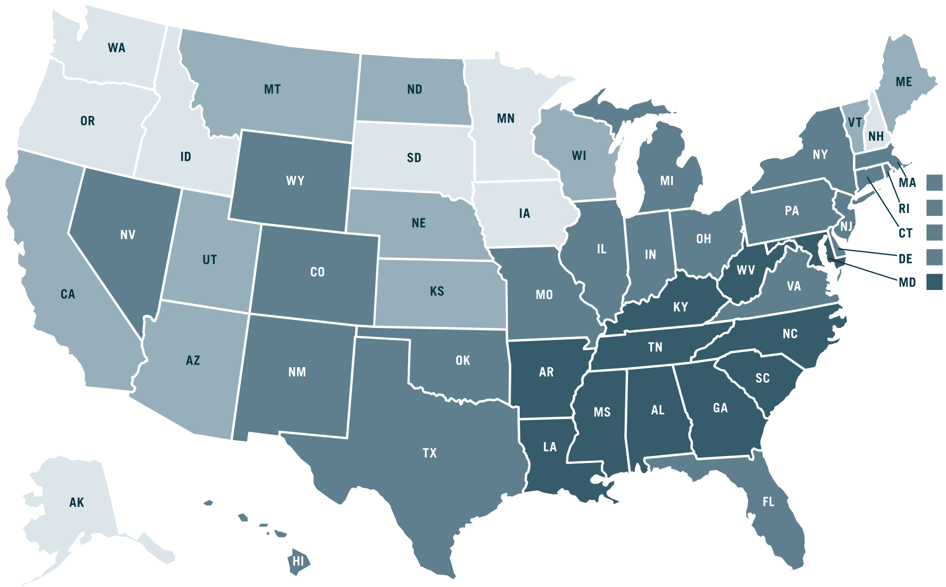
- Nationally, low-birthweight babies represented 8.2 percent of all live births in 2008, decreasing slightly from its four-decade high of 8.3 percent in 2006.
- While the upward trend appears to have halted, the rate in 2008 is still 8 percent above the rate in 2000.
- Between 2000 and 2008, the percent of low-birthweight babies worsened in 46 states; remained unchanged in 2 states; and only showed some improvement in Delaware, Idaho, and the District of Columbia.
- Although Black/African-American babies are much more likely to be born low birthweight than other racial and Hispanic origin groups, the percent of African-American babies born with a low birthweight has declined slightly over the past two years—following the national trend.

Percent Low-Birthweight Babies by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2008



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino.

Percent Low-Birthweight Babies: 2008*



6.0 to 6.6 | 6.7 to 7.4 | 7.5 to 8.9 | 9.0 to 11.8

*Babies weighing less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds) at birth.

Rank	State	Rate
1	Alaska	6.0
2	Oregon	6.1
3	Washington	6.3
4	Minnesota	6.4
5	Idaho	6.5
5	New Hampshire	6.5
5	South Dakota	6.5
8	Iowa	6.6
9	Maine	6.7
10	California	6.8
10	North Dakota	6.8
10	Utah	6.8
13	Nebraska	7.0

Rank	State	Rate
13	Vermont	7.0
13	Wisconsin	7.0
16	Arizona	7.1
17	Kansas	7.2
18	Montana	7.4
19	Massachusetts	7.8
20	Rhode Island	7.9
21	Connecticut	8.0
21	Nevada	8.0
23	Hawaii	8.1
23	Missouri	8.1
25	New York	8.2
26	Indiana	8.3

Rank	State	Rate
26	Oklahoma	8.3
26	Pennsylvania	8.3
26	Virginia	8.3
26	Wyoming	8.3
31	Illinois	8.4
31	New Jersey	8.4
31	Texas	8.4
34	Delaware	8.5
34	New Mexico	8.5
36	Michigan	8.6
36	Ohio	8.6
38	Florida	8.8
39	Colorado	8.9

Rank	State	Rate
40	North Carolina	9.1
41	Arkansas	9.2
41	Kentucky	9.2
41	Maryland	9.2
41	Tennessee	9.2
45	West Virginia	9.5
46	Georgia	9.6
47	South Carolina	9.9
48	Alabama	10.6
49	Louisiana	10.8
50	Mississippi	11.8
N.R.	District of Columbia	10.5
N.R.	Puerto Rico	12.5

N.R. Not Ranked.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Infant Mortality Rate

The Infant Mortality Rate (deaths to persons less than 1 year old per 1,000 live births) is often used to measure the overall health of a population. It is related to maternal health, public health practices, socioeconomic conditions, and the ability to access appropriate health care for infants and pregnant women. Problems related to short gestation, low birthweight, congenital malformations, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) are the leading causes of infant deaths. After reaching the lowest rate since 1990 in 2006, the Infant Mortality Rate increased in 2007.

» Between 2000 and 2007, the United States lost 225,703 babies under age 1. During 2007, 29,138 infants under age 1 were lost, or about 80 infants each day. This represents 6.8 deaths per 1,000 live births.

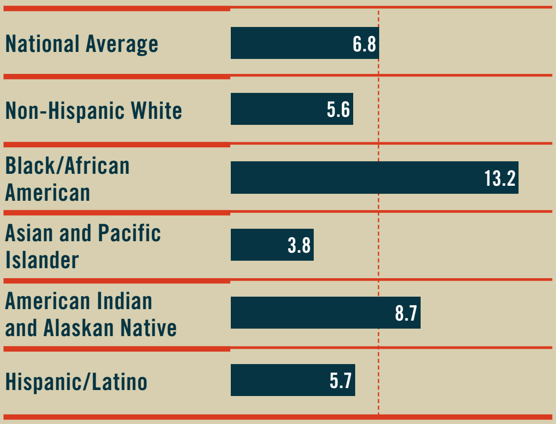
» Between 2000 and 2007, the Infant Mortality Rate improved in 30 states and deteriorated in 17 states and the District of Columbia. Connecticut, Florida, and Oklahoma saw no change in the indicator.

» The Infant Mortality Rate varies widely across states, the best state-level rate being half that of the worst state. In 2007, rates ranged from a low of 4.8 per 1,000 live births in Washington to a high of 10.0 per 1,000 in Mississippi.

» Although the United States spends more on health care than any other industrialized country, the *Health, United States, 2009* report found that the United States ranked 28th among 32 industrialized countries, right behind Slovakia (6.6 per 1,000 live births), for its Infant Mortality Rate.

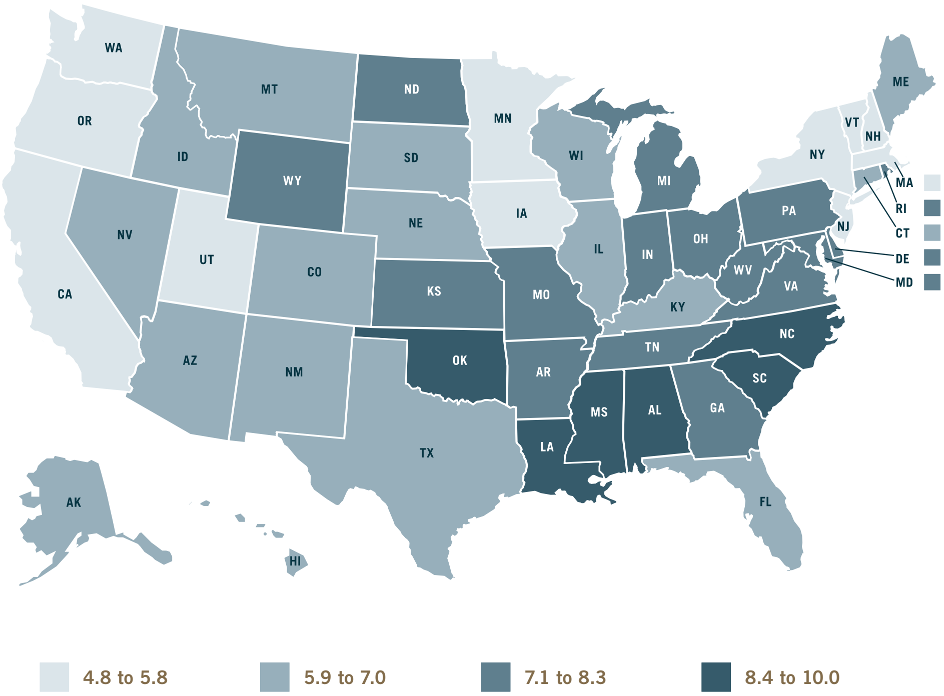
NOTE Infant mortality data for 2008 were not available for inclusion in this report.

Infant Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births) by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2007



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino.

Infant Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births): 2007



Rank	State	Rate
1	Washington	4.8
2	Massachusetts	4.9
3	Utah	5.1
3	Vermont	5.1
5	California	5.2
5	New Jersey	5.2
7	New Hampshire	5.4
8	Iowa	5.5
8	Minnesota	5.5
10	New York	5.6
11	Oregon	5.8
12	Colorado	6.1
13	Maine	6.3

Rank	State	Rate
13	New Mexico	6.3
13	Texas	6.3
16	Montana	6.4
16	Nevada	6.4
16	South Dakota	6.4
19	Alaska	6.5
19	Hawaii	6.5
19	Wisconsin	6.5
22	Connecticut	6.6
23	Illinois	6.7
23	Kentucky	6.7
25	Idaho	6.8
25	Nebraska	6.8

Rank	State	Rate
27	Arizona	6.9
28	Florida	7.0
29	Wyoming	7.3
30	Rhode Island	7.4
31	Delaware	7.5
31	Missouri	7.5
31	North Dakota	7.5
31	West Virginia	7.5
35	Indiana	7.6
35	Pennsylvania	7.6
37	Arkansas	7.7
37	Ohio	7.7
39	Virginia	7.8

Rank	State	Rate
40	Kansas	7.9
40	Michigan	7.9
42	Georgia	8.0
42	Maryland	8.0
44	Tennessee	8.3
45	North Carolina	8.5
45	Oklahoma	8.5
47	South Carolina	8.6
48	Louisiana	9.2
49	Alabama	9.9
50	Mississippi	10.0
N.R.	District of Columbia	13.1
N.R.	Puerto Rico	8.4

N.R. Not Ranked.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Child Death Rate

The Child Death Rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14) reflects the physical health of children, maternal health, access to health care, community environment, use of safety practices, and the level of adult supervision children receive. Advances in medical care and declines in motor vehicle accidents contribute to the declining Child Death Rate. Accidents are the leading cause of death for this age group. Deaths from motor vehicle accidents accounted for 17 percent of child deaths in 2007. Nearly half of the children under age 15 who died in traffic crashes were not wearing a seat belt or other restraint. Many of the accidental deaths can be prevented by using seat belts and safety seats and providing adequate supervision. The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control reports that for each injury-related death in 2007, there were 1,540 injury-related emergency room visits and about 22 hospital admissions for children who survived their injuries.

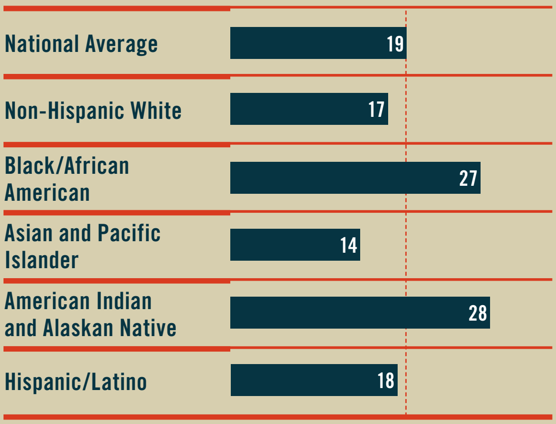
» In 2007, an average of 30 children between the ages of 1 and 14 died each day in the United States, totaling 10,850 children, or 19 deaths per 100,000.

» Between 2000 and 2007, the Child Death Rate decreased in 40 states and the District of Columbia; was unchanged in 6; and increased in Hawaii, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. Delaware saw the largest decrease, while Hawaii saw the largest increase.

» The Child Death Rate in 2007 ranged from 9 per 100,000 in Rhode Island to 34 per 100,000 in Mississippi.

» The Child Death Rates for American Indians and Alaskan Natives and African Americans are the highest of all major racial and ethnic groups.

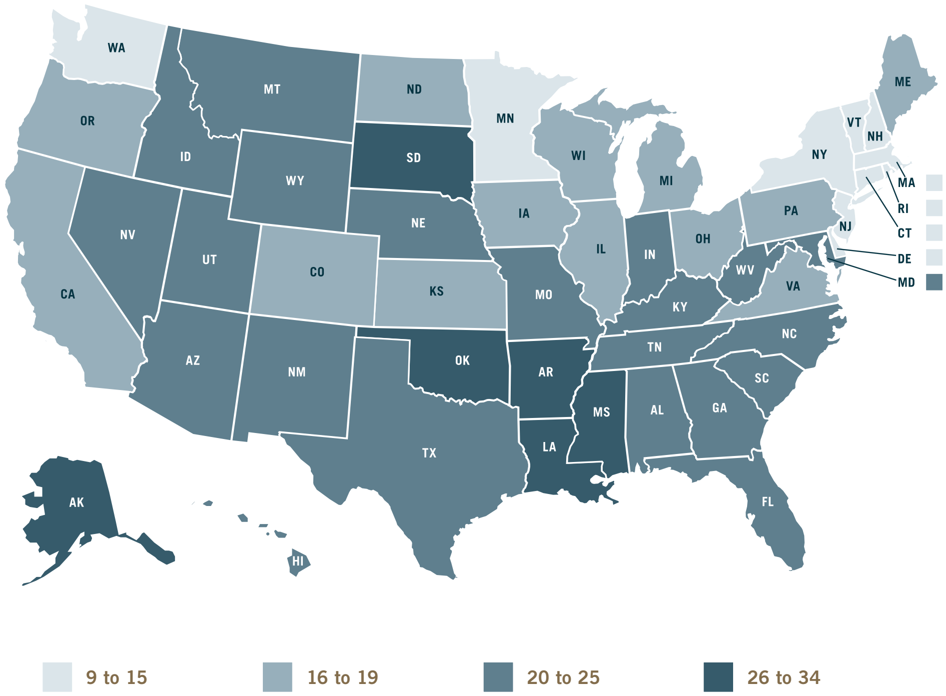
Child Death Rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14) by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2007



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino.

NOTE Child death data for 2008 were not available for inclusion in this report.

Child Death Rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14): 2007



Rank	State	Rate
1	Rhode Island	9
2	Delaware	10
3	Connecticut	12
3	Massachusetts	12
3	Vermont	12
6	Minnesota	15
6	New Hampshire	15
6	New Jersey	15
6	New York	15
6	Washington	15
11	California	16
11	Colorado	16
11	Maine	16
14	Oregon	17
15	Michigan	18
15	Ohio	18
15	Pennsylvania	18
15	Virginia	18
19	Illinois	19
19	Iowa	19
19	Kansas	19
19	North Dakota	19
19	Wisconsin	19
24	Nebraska	20
24	Tennessee	20
24	Utah	20
27	Arizona	21
27	Florida	21
27	Georgia	21
27	Hawaii	21
27	Indiana	21
27	Maryland	21
27	North Carolina	21
27	Texas	21
27	Wyoming	21
36	Idaho	22
36	Kentucky	22
36	Montana	22
36	Nevada	22
40	Alabama	23
40	Missouri	23
42	New Mexico	24
42	West Virginia	24
44	South Carolina	25
45	South Dakota	27
46	Arkansas	28
47	Louisiana	29
47	Oklahoma	29
49	Alaska	31
50	Mississippi	34
N.R.	District of Columbia	29
N.R.	Puerto Rico	16

N.R. Not Ranked.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

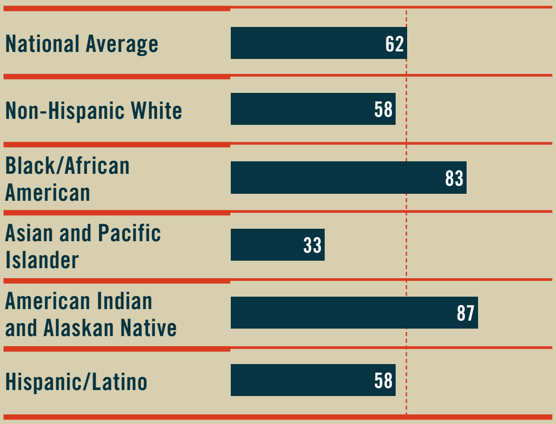
Teen Death Rate

As people move into their middle and late teenage years, they encounter new risks that can cost them their life. In 2007, accidents, homicides, and suicides accounted for 77 percent of deaths to teens ages 15 to 19 in the United States. Accidents account for at least three times as many teen deaths as any other cause, including homicide. Most lethal accidents are automobile accidents. In 2007, 6,493 teens died due to accidents (76 percent of them, or 4,939 deaths, were due to motor vehicle accidents), 2,224 teen deaths were due to homicide, and 1,481 teen deaths were due to suicide.

- » In 2007, 13,299 adolescents ages 15 to 19 died. This is the equivalent of the number of passengers on 38 jumbo jets. Virtually all of these deaths were preventable.
- » The Teen Death Rate declined from 67 deaths per 100,000 teens in 2000 to 62 deaths in 2007. The Teen Death Rate had been steadily declining between 1990 and 1998, when progress began to slow. In 2007, the Teen Death Rate was only slightly lower than in 1998.
- » While there was a decline in teen deaths due to accidents and suicides, between 2000 and 2007, homicides increased by 11 percent.
- » Between 2000 and 2007, the Teen Death Rate declined in 40 states and the District of Columbia, increased in 9 states, and remained unchanged in Ohio.
- » In 2007, American Indian (87 per 100,000) and African-American (83 per 100,000) teens had the highest death rates, while Asian and Pacific Islander (33 per 100,000) youth had the lowest.

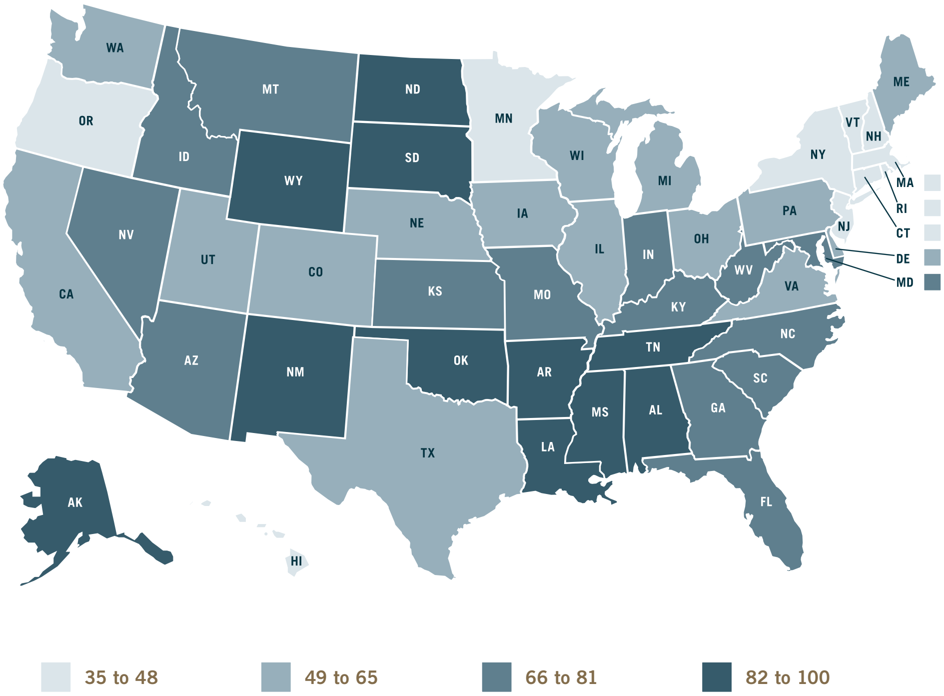
NOTE Teen death data for 2008 were not available for inclusion in this report.

Teen Death Rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19) by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2007



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino.

Teen Death Rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19): 2007



Rank	State	Rate
1	Vermont	35
2	Hawaii	39
2	New York	39
2	Rhode Island	39
5	Minnesota	43
5	New Hampshire	43
7	Connecticut	44
7	Massachusetts	44
7	New Jersey	44
10	Oregon	48
11	Washington	51
12	California	52
13	Virginia	53
14	Maine	54
15	Iowa	56
16	Delaware	57
17	Colorado	58
17	Ohio	58
19	Michigan	59
19	Pennsylvania	59
19	Utah	59
22	Illinois	60
23	Texas	63
24	Wisconsin	64
25	Nebraska	65
26	Maryland	67
26	North Carolina	67
28	Indiana	68
29	Kansas	69
30	West Virginia	70
31	Nevada	71
32	Florida	72
33	Georgia	73
34	Kentucky	74
35	Idaho	77
36	Arizona	80
36	Missouri	80
36	Montana	80
39	South Carolina	81
40	Oklahoma	83
40	South Dakota	83
42	Tennessee	84
43	Wyoming	86
44	North Dakota	89
45	Alabama	93
45	Arkansas	93
47	Louisiana	94
48	New Mexico	96
49	Mississippi	98
50	Alaska	100
N.R.	District of Columbia	92
N.R.	Puerto Rico	67

N.R. Not Ranked.

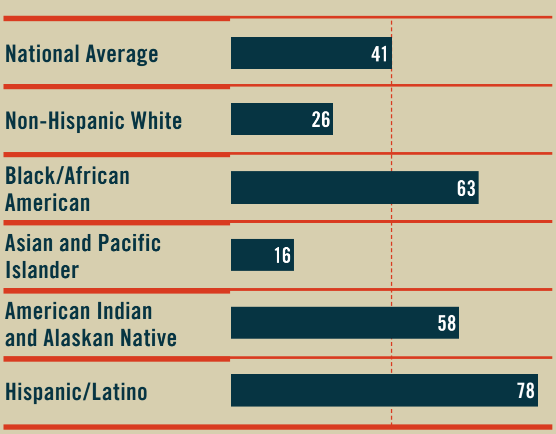
Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Teen Birth Rate

As Americans, we believe that every child should have a shot at achieving their full potential: getting a good education; securing a job that pays well; and, when they are ready, raising a family of their own. But not all children have these opportunities. Teenage childbearing can have long-term negative effects on both the adolescent mother and the newborn. Babies born to teen mothers are at higher risk of being low birthweight and preterm. They are also far more likely to be born into families with limited educational and economic resources, which function as barriers to future success. In 2006, the United States saw the first increase in the Teen Birth Rate in more than a decade, a rise that continued through 2007. After the two-year increase, in 2008, the Teen Birth Rate declined to 41 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19.

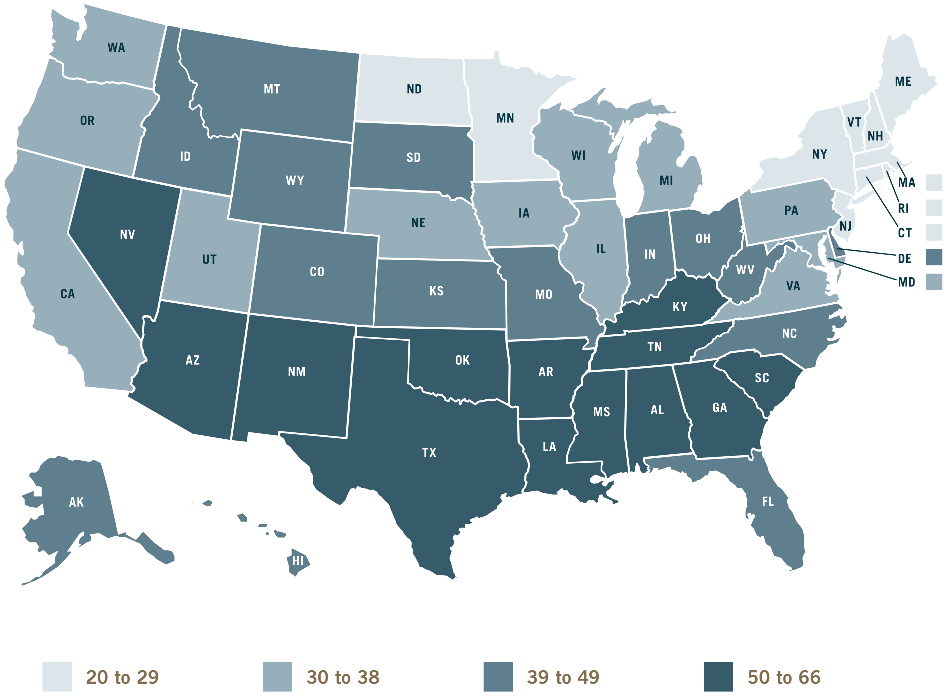
- In 2008, there were 434,758 babies born to females ages 15 to 19. That represents about 1,191 births to teens each day.
- Between 2000 and 2008, the Teen Birth Rate decreased in 41 states and the District of Columbia, increased in 7, and was unchanged in Iowa and Kansas.
- Among the states, the Teen Birth Rate in 2008 ranged from a low of 20 per 1,000 in Massachusetts and New Hampshire to a high of 66 per 1,000 in Mississippi.
- The Teen Birth Rate for Latinos remains the highest across the largest racial and Hispanic origin groups, at nearly twice the national average. Although it remains high, the 2008 rate for births to Latino teens is the lowest it has been in a decade.
- The United States has the highest Teen Birth Rate among comparable countries. The U.S. Teen Birth Rate is nearly twice as high as that in the United Kingdom (26.7 per 1,000) which has the highest Teen Birth Rate in Europe. In addition, the U.S. rate is more than triple the rate in Canada (14.1 per 1,000).

Teen Birth Rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15–19) by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2008



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino.

Teen Birth Rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15–19): 2008



Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate
1	Massachusetts	20	13	Michigan	33	25	Ohio	41	39	Nevada	53
1	New Hampshire	20	13	Virginia	33	28	Hawaii	42	39	South Carolina	53
3	Vermont	21	16	Iowa	34	29	Colorado	43	42	Louisiana	54
4	Connecticut	23	17	Utah	35	29	Florida	43	43	Arizona	56
5	New Jersey	24	17	Washington	35	31	Indiana	44	43	Kentucky	56
6	New York	25	19	Nebraska	37	32	Missouri	45	43	Tennessee	56
7	Maine	26	19	Oregon	37	33	Kansas	46	46	Arkansas	62
8	Minnesota	27	21	California	38	34	Alaska	47	46	Oklahoma	62
9	North Dakota	29	21	Illinois	38	35	North Carolina	49	48	Texas	63
9	Rhode Island	29	23	Delaware	40	35	West Virginia	49	49	New Mexico	64
11	Pennsylvania	31	23	South Dakota	40	35	Wyoming	49	50	Mississippi	66
11	Wisconsin	31	25	Idaho	41	38	Georgia	52	N.R.	District of Columbia	51
13	Maryland	33	25	Montana	41	39	Alabama	53	N.R.	Puerto Rico	55

N.R. Not Ranked.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Percent of Teens Not in School and Not High School Graduates

As America moves further into the 21st century, advanced skills and technical knowledge will be required for a healthy economy. We have a responsibility to ensure that our future workforce can compete on a global scale. Graduating from high school is critical for obtaining post-secondary education and getting a good job. Adolescents who don't complete high school will find it difficult to achieve financial success in adulthood. In 2009, the median earnings for someone without a high school diploma ($18,400) was less than half that of someone with a bachelor's degree ($47,500), and less than one-third that of an individual with a graduate degree ($62,300).

» In 2009, about 1.1 million teens between the ages of 16 and 19 were not in school and had not graduated from high school.

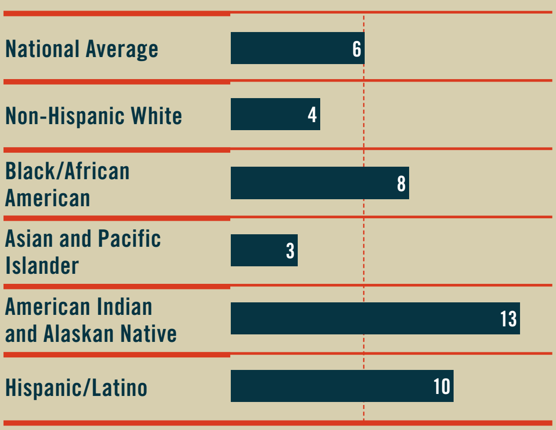
» Although the number continues to be unacceptably high, the likelihood that teens will not be in school and will not graduate has dropped. The rate in 2009 (6 percent) was slightly more than half the rate in 2000 (11 percent).

» Between 2000 and 2009, the rate fell in 45 states and the District of Columbia; increased in Hawaii, Montana, North Dakota, and West Virginia; and was unchanged in Iowa.

» In 2009, the Percent of Teens Not in School and Not High School Graduates (ages 16–19) ranged from a low of 3 percent in New Hampshire and New Jersey to a high of 11 percent in Nevada.

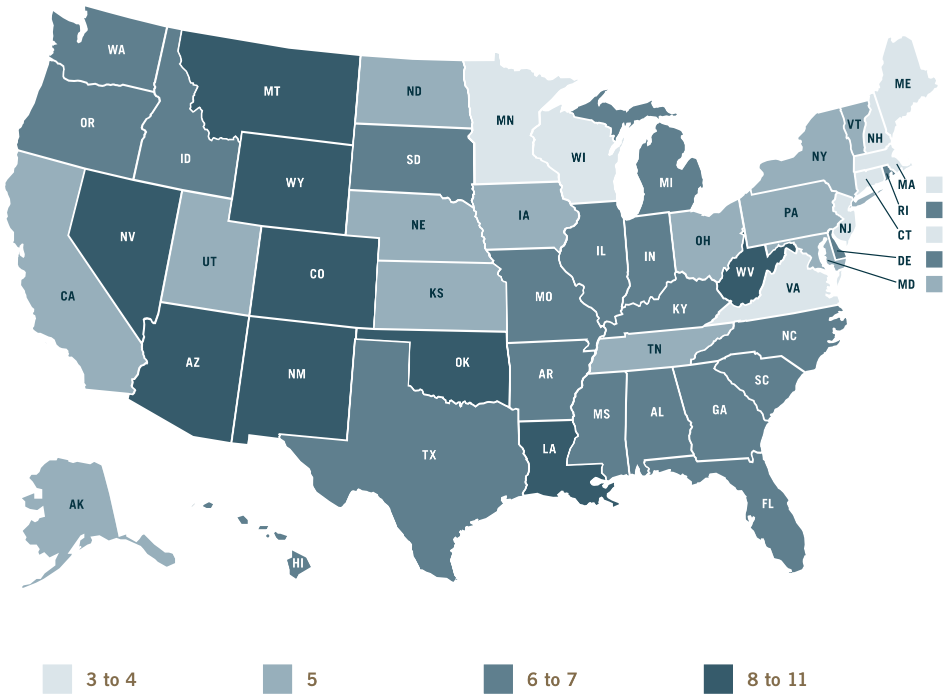
» Although large gaps still exist, more teens across all five of the largest racial and ethnic groups stayed in school and obtained a high school diploma or GED in 2009 than in 2000. However, since 2006, American Indians have seen an increase in the percentage of teens that left school and did not receive a high school diploma.

Percent of Teens Not in School and Not High School Graduates (ages 16–19) by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2009



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino. Data for Non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives are for persons who selected only one race.

Percent of Teens Not in School and Not High School Graduates (ages 16–19): 2009



Rank	State	Rate
1	New Hampshire	3
1	New Jersey	3
3	Connecticut	4
3	Maine	4
3	Massachusetts	4
3	Minnesota	4
3	Virginia	4
3	Wisconsin	4
9	Alaska	5
9	California	5
9	Iowa	5
9	Kansas	5
9	Maryland	5
9	Nebraska	5
9	New York	5
9	North Dakota	5
9	Ohio	5
9	Pennsylvania	5
9	Tennessee	5
9	Utah	5
9	Vermont	5
22	Delaware	6
22	Idaho	6
22	Illinois	6
22	Michigan	6
22	Oregon	6
22	South Dakota	6
22	Washington	6
29	Alabama	7
29	Arkansas	7
29	Florida	7
29	Georgia	7
29	Hawaii	7
29	Indiana	7
29	Kentucky	7
29	Mississippi	7
29	Missouri	7
29	North Carolina	7
29	Rhode Island	7
29	South Carolina	7
29	Texas	7
42	Arizona	8
42	Colorado	8
42	Louisiana	8
42	Oklahoma	8
42	Wyoming	8
47	Montana	9
47	New Mexico	9
47	West Virginia	9
50	Nevada	11
N.R.	District of Columbia	7
N.R.	Puerto Rico	8

N.R. Not Ranked.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Percent of Teens Not Attending School and Not Working

School and work help teens acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become productive members of society. Teens who leave school and do not become part of the workforce are at risk of experiencing negative outcomes as they transition to adulthood. The Percent of Teens Not Attending School and Not Working (sometimes called "Idle Teens") reflects young people ages 16 to 19 who are not engaged in school or the workforce. Whereas those who have dropped out of school are clearly vulnerable, many young persons who have finished school but are not working are also at a disadvantage in achieving economic success in adulthood.

» In 2009, about 1.6 million teens between the ages of 16 and 19 were neither enrolled in school nor working. This is 149,000 more youth than in 2008.

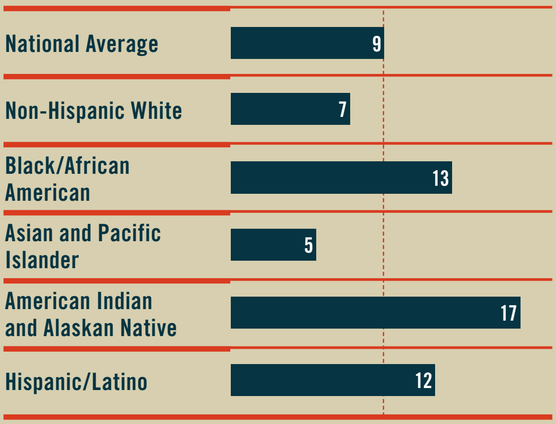
» Between 2008 and 2009, the Percent of Teens Not Attending School and Not Working (ages 16–19) increased in 35 states and the District of Columbia; remained unchanged in 12 states; and decreased in Arkansas, Delaware, and Maine.

» In 2009, the Percent of Teens Not Attending School and Not Working ranged from a low of 5 percent in New Hampshire to a high of 15 percent in West Virginia.

» In 2009, American Indian, African-American, and Hispanic teens were considerably more likely to be neither in school nor working than their non-Hispanic white and Asian counterparts.

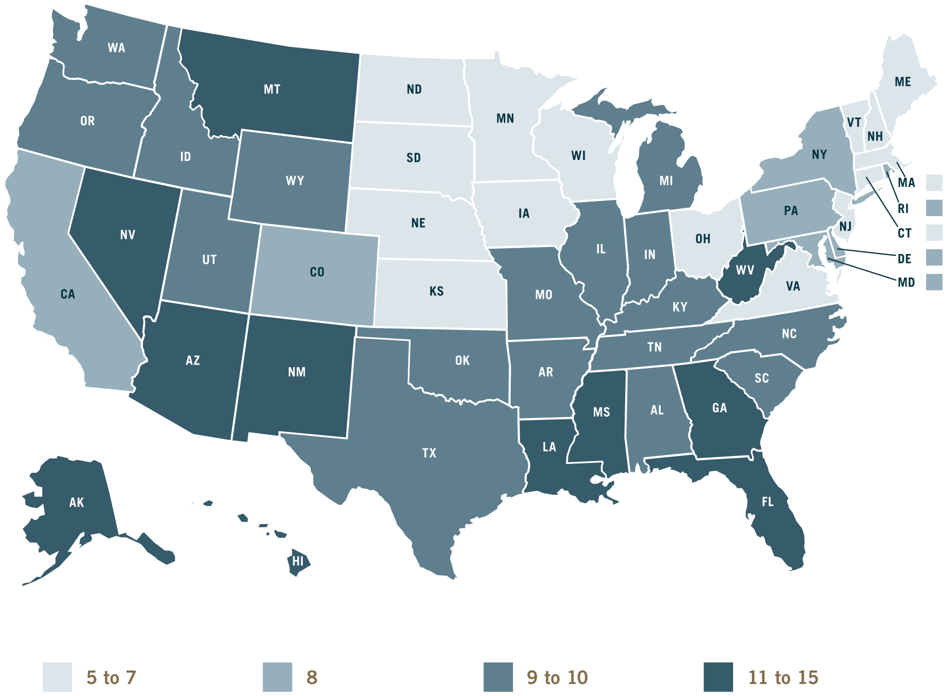
NOTE Significant changes were made to the 2008 American Community Survey questions on labor force participation and number of weeks worked. Due to these changes in methodology, comparisons were not made to estimates from previous years.

Percent of Teens Not Attending School and Not Working (ages 16–19) by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2009



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino. Data for Non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives are for persons who selected only one race.

Percent of Teens Not Attending School and Not Working (ages 16–19): 2009



Rank	State	Rate
1	New Hampshire	5
2	Connecticut	6
2	Iowa	6
2	Massachusetts	6
2	Minnesota	6
2	Nebraska	6
2	Wisconsin	6
8	Kansas	7
8	Maine	7
8	New Jersey	7
8	North Dakota	7
8	Ohio	7
8	South Dakota	7
8	Vermont	7
8	Virginia	7
16	California	8
16	Colorado	8
16	Delaware	8
16	Maryland	8
16	New York	8
16	Pennsylvania	8
16	Rhode Island	8
23	Idaho	9
23	Illinois	9
23	Indiana	9
23	Michigan	9
23	Missouri	9
23	Oklahoma	9
23	Oregon	9
23	Utah	9
23	Washington	9
23	Wyoming	9
33	Alabama	10
33	Arkansas	10
33	Kentucky	10
33	North Carolina	10
33	South Carolina	10
33	Tennessee	10
33	Texas	10
40	Arizona	11
40	Florida	11
40	Louisiana	11
40	Montana	11
40	New Mexico	11
45	Alaska	12
45	Georgia	12
45	Hawaii	12
45	Mississippi	12
49	Nevada	13
50	West Virginia	15
N.R.	District of Columbia	10
N.R.	Puerto Rico	15

N.R. Not Ranked.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

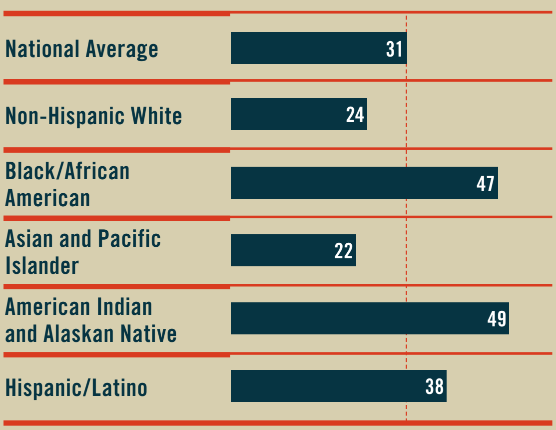
Percent of Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment

Children thrive when parents have the opportunity to earn income sufficient to support their family. The recent recession has hit families with children hard, especially those who were already vulnerable. Children living in families that "lack secure parental employment" have higher poverty rates and are more likely to lack access to the health and family benefits that a stable job provides. This reality puts children at higher risk of poor health and educational outcomes. Although there are significant benefits when a parent works, having one parent employed full time, year-round is not a guarantee for economic security. Nearly one of two (48 percent) children living in families maintained by two parents who were living below the poverty line had at least one parent working year-round, full time.

- » In 2009, 23.1 million children in the United States lived in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment.
- » The Percent of Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment increased from 27 percent in 2008 to 31 percent in 2009. This increase represents 2.9 million more children living in families without secure parental employment.
- » Between 2008 and 2009, 48 states and the District of Columbia saw an increase in this indicator, while Oklahoma and Vermont saw no change. Nevada was the state with the largest increase.
- » Among the states, the 2009 figures ranged from a low of 21 percent in North Dakota to a high of 39 percent in Mississippi.
- » In 2009, nearly 1 of every 2 American Indian and African-American children lived without securely employed parents compared to 1 of every 4 non-Hispanic white and Asian children.

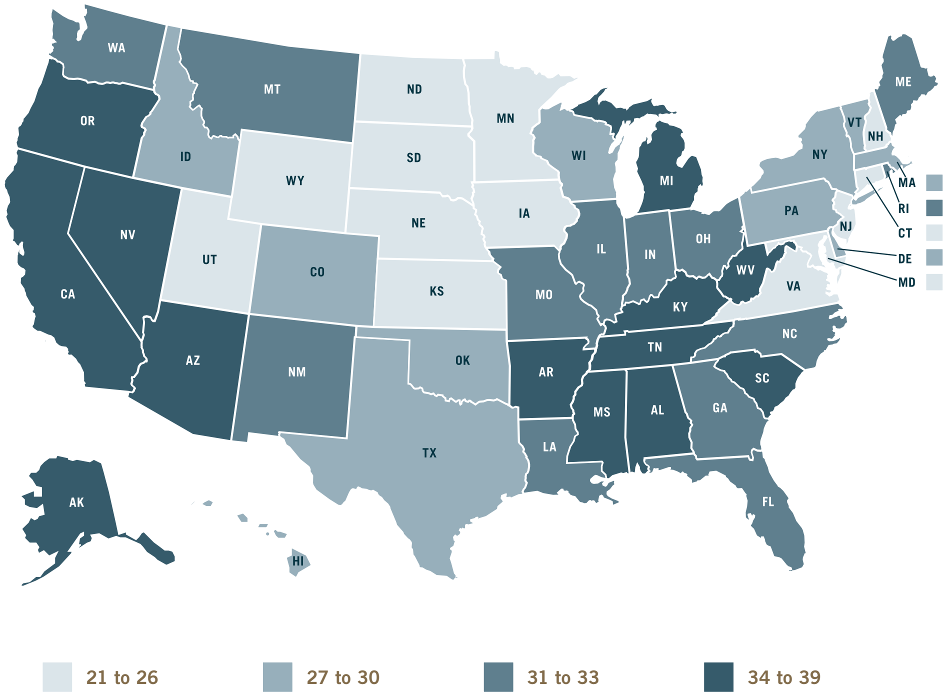
NOTE Significant changes were made to the 2008 American Community Survey questions on labor force participation and number of weeks worked. Due to these changes in methodology, comparisons were not made to estimates from previous years.

Percent of Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2009



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino. Data for Non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives are for persons who selected only one race.

Percent of Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment: 2009



Rank	State	Rate
1	North Dakota	21
2	Iowa	22
2	Nebraska	22
2	Utah	22
5	Maryland	24
5	New Hampshire	24
5	South Dakota	24
8	Kansas	25
8	Minnesota	25
8	New Jersey	25
8	Virginia	25
8	Wyoming	25
13	Connecticut	26
14	Wisconsin	27
15	Colorado	28
15	Delaware	28
15	Massachusetts	28
15	Vermont	28
19	Idaho	29
19	Oklahoma	29
19	Pennsylvania	29
22	Hawaii	30
22	New York	30
22	Texas	30
25	Illinois	31
25	Maine	31
25	Missouri	31
25	Rhode Island	31
25	Washington	31
30	Florida	32
30	Georgia	32
30	Indiana	32
30	New Mexico	32
30	Ohio	32
35	Louisiana	33
35	Montana	33
35	North Carolina	33
38	Arizona	34
38	Arkansas	34
38	California	34
38	Nevada	34
38	Oregon	34
38	South Carolina	34
44	Alabama	35
44	Tennessee	35
44	West Virginia	35
47	Alaska	36
47	Michigan	36
49	Kentucky	38
50	Mississippi	39
N.R.	District of Columbia	44
N.R.	Puerto Rico	52

N.R. Not Ranked.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Percent of Children in Poverty

It is critical that we as a nation ensure that all children have the opportunity to become productive members of society. Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to experience health and behavioral problems, face difficulty in school, become teen parents, and earn less or be unemployed as adults. Such factors are barriers to future economic success and stability. The Percent of Children in Poverty is perhaps the most global and widely used indicator of child well-being. Our data are based on the official poverty measure as determined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. The 2009 poverty line was $21,756 for a family of two adults and two children.

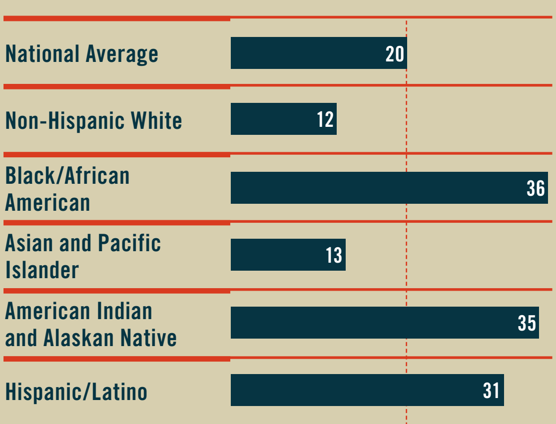
» In 2009, 20 percent of children (14.7 million) were poor, up from 17 percent in 2000. This represents about 2.5 million more children living in poverty in 2009 than in 2000.

» Between 2000 and 2009, child poverty increased in 38 states, decreased in 7 states and the District of Columbia, and remained unchanged in 5.

» Among the states, the child poverty rate for 2009 ranged from a low of 11 percent in New Hampshire to a high of 31 percent in Mississippi.

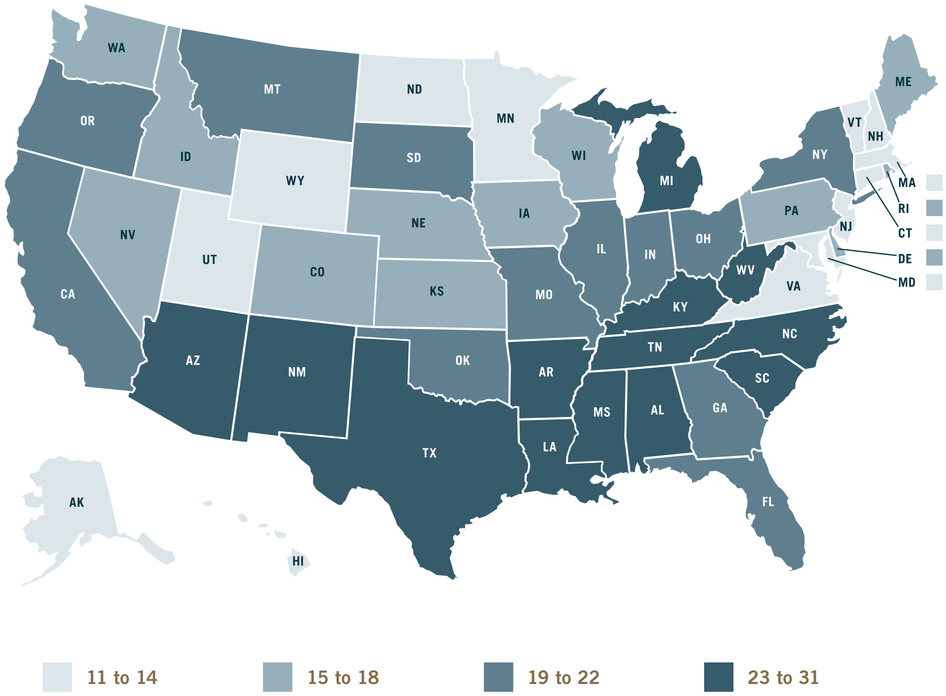
» Between 2000 and 2009 poverty increased among non-Hispanic white, African-American, American Indian, and Hispanic children, while declining among Asian children. African-American, American Indian, and Hispanic children continue to be more likely to live in poverty than white and Asian children.

Percent of Children in Poverty (income below $21,756 for a family of two adults and two children in 2009) by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2009



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino. Data for Non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives are for persons who selected only one race.

Percent of Children in Poverty (income below $21,756 for a family of two adults and two children in 2009): 2009



Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate
1	New Hampshire	11	14	Nebraska	15	26	Oregon	19	38	North Carolina	23
2	Connecticut	12	15	Delaware	16	26	South Dakota	19	41	Louisiana	24
2	Maryland	12	15	Iowa	16	29	California	20	41	South Carolina	24
2	Utah	12	15	Washington	16	29	Indiana	20	41	Tennessee	24
5	Alaska	13	18	Colorado	17	29	New York	20	41	Texas	24
5	Massachusetts	13	18	Maine	17	32	Florida	21	41	West Virginia	24
5	New Jersey	13	18	Pennsylvania	17	32	Missouri	21	46	Alabama	25
5	North Dakota	13	18	Rhode Island	17	32	Montana	21	46	New Mexico	25
5	Vermont	13	18	Wisconsin	17	35	Georgia	22	48	Kentucky	26
5	Wyoming	13	23	Idaho	18	35	Ohio	22	49	Arkansas	27
11	Hawaii	14	23	Kansas	18	35	Oklahoma	22	50	Mississippi	31
11	Minnesota	14	23	Nevada	18	38	Arizona	23	N.R.	District of Columbia	29
11	Virginia	14	26	Illinois	19	38	Michigan	23	N.R.	Puerto Rico	57

N.R. Not Ranked.

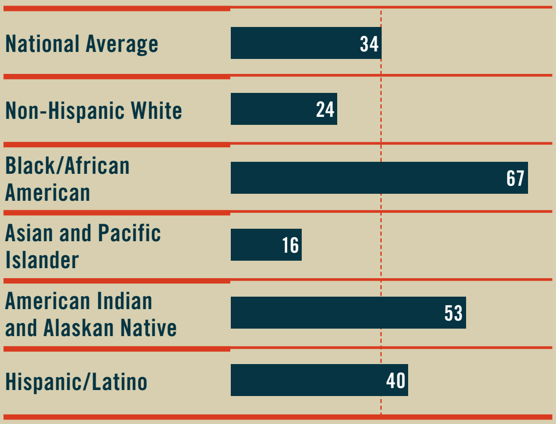
Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families

Much of the public interest in family structure is linked to the fact that children growing up in single-parent families typically do not have the same economic or human resources available as those growing up in two-parent families. In 2009, 34 percent of single-parent families with related children had incomes below the poverty line, compared to 8 percent of married-couple families with children. Only about one-third of female-headed families reported receiving any child support or alimony payments in 2009. The U.S. Census Bureau defines single-parent families as those families headed by an unmarried adult.

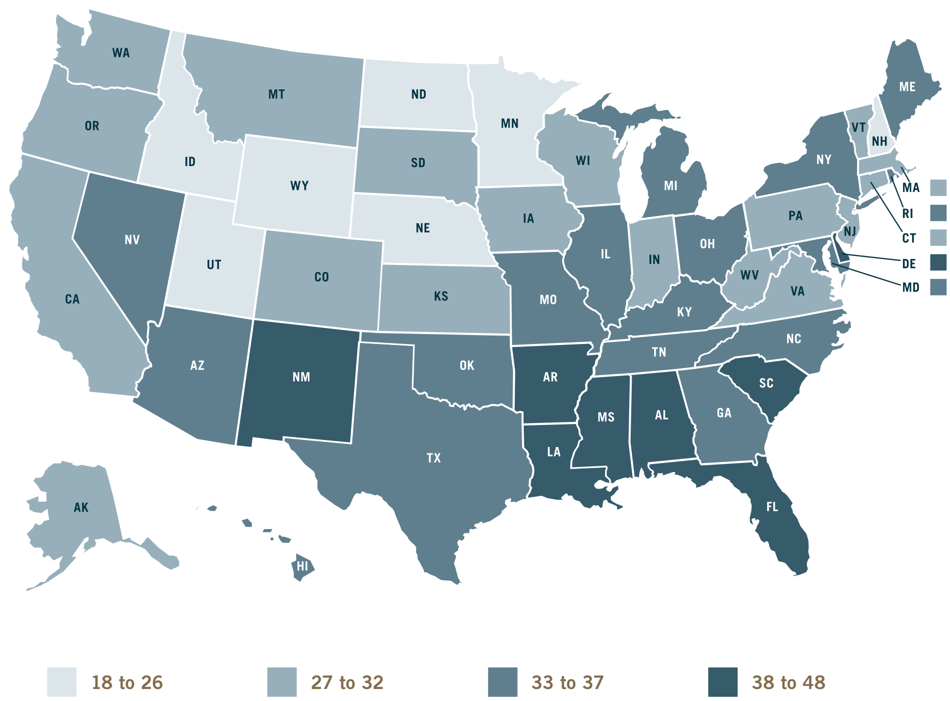
- » About 23.8 million children lived in single-parent families in 2009. Of these children, 5.2 million lived with cohabiting domestic partners.
- » Nationwide, there was an increase in the Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families, from 31 percent in 2000 to 34 percent in 2009. There were 3.1 million more children living in single-parent families in 2009 than in 2000.
- » During this period, Oregon, Utah, and the District of Columbia recorded a decrease in the Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families; 3 states reported no change in this measure; while the situation worsened in 45 states.
- » In 2009, the Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families ranged from a low of 18 percent in Utah to a high of 48 percent in Mississippi.
- » Between 2000 and 2009, increases were seen across all racial and ethnic groups except Asian and Pacific Islander children. Two-thirds (67 percent) of African-American children lived in single-parent families, compared to two-fifths (40 percent) of Hispanic/Latino youth and slightly less than one-forth (24 percent) of non-Hispanic white children.

Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2009



NOTE Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino. Data for Non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives are for persons who selected only one race.

Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families: 2009



Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate	Rank	State	Rate
1	Utah	18	12	Kansas	30	26	Illinois	33	38	Tennessee	36
2	Idaho	24	12	New Jersey	30	26	Maine	33	41	Arizona	37
3	New Hampshire	25	12	Vermont	30	29	Kentucky	34	41	Georgia	37
3	North Dakota	25	12	Washington	30	29	Maryland	34	43	Arkansas	38
5	Minnesota	26	12	Wisconsin	30	29	Michigan	34	43	Delaware	38
5	Nebraska	26	19	Montana	31	32	Missouri	35	43	Florida	38
5	Wyoming	26	19	Oregon	31	32	Nevada	35	46	Alabama	39
8	Colorado	28	19	Virginia	31	32	New York	35	47	South Carolina	40
8	South Dakota	28	22	California	32	32	Ohio	35	48	New Mexico	41
10	Iowa	29	22	Indiana	32	32	Oklahoma	35	49	Louisiana	42
10	Massachusetts	29	22	Pennsylvania	32	32	Texas	35	50	Mississippi	48
12	Alaska	30	22	West Virginia	32	38	North Carolina	36	N.R.	District of Columbia	61
12	Connecticut	30	26	Hawaii	33	38	Rhode Island	36	N.R.	Puerto Rico	54

N.R. Not Ranked.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011

Family Stories

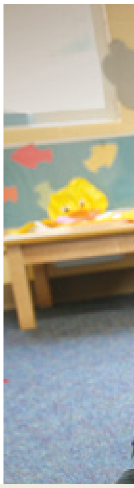
CHARLES LEACH III Atlanta, Georgia

"They give us a printout every day that lets us know what he's learning so mommy and daddy can teach the same thing."

As a young father trying to get a foothold in the work world during a tough economy, Charles Leach III, 21, of Atlanta says subsidized child care has not only eased his family's current financial struggle, but it is also preparing his young son for a lifetime of learning.

"It keeps at least $600 in our pocket each month. That's real important because I now just started back working," explains Leach, whose son attends the Early Learning and Literacy Resource Center in Atlanta free of charge, thanks to the Early Head Start program and Georgia's subsidized child care assistance program.

The Center also is helping 18-month-old Sonny learn age-appropriate skills before he starts kindergarten so that he is prepared to succeed in school and beyond. "The Center is like our family—we help them, and they help us," says Leach, who participates in the Center's parent training and activities, along with Sonny's mother Jessika Campbell, 24, a bank teller.



"They give us a printout every day that lets us know what he's learning so mommy and daddy can teach the same thing," he adds. "We didn't have [that] opportunity, and he's going to need that. It's very important because in this economy, you have to be educated to get a good job."

A high-quality learning complex attached to a renovated elementary school, the Center provides supports that parents, caregivers, and children need for education achievement. In addition to local, state, and federal funds, the Center receives private funding from such groups as the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

While Sonny is at child care, his father works full time as a security guard. In recent years, he has held several jobs, off and on, while completing a job-readiness course, a one-year intensive training program, and a technology training program offered through The Center for Working Families, Inc., a private nonprofit agency supported by Casey.

"I wouldn't have had half of the jobs I've had if it wasn't for [the Center]," notes Leach, who hopes to soon attend college to earn a computer science degree. Although, he adds, "it's harder now to find scholarships and grants."

Sonny receives health care through his mother's employer-sponsored insurance program, and Leach hopes to get insurance through his job, which he started in May. However, he was uninsured and unemployed when he was involved in a traffic accident this year that totaled his truck. Leach now faces medical bills for treatment of back and eye injuries.

With buying food for Sonny a priority, his parents often depend on friends and family for meals. They hope to soon receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (formerly food stamps), which will be a big help, says Leach.

"We have been struggling," he says. "We're trying to get over this hill so by the time Sonny is two years old, he'll know that we're comfortable."

Practical Solutions

Restricting the child care tax credit to low- and moderate-income families and redirecting the savings to child care subsidies for families struggling to achieve stability help both generations get ahead.

APPENDIX

MULTI-YEAR STATE TREND DATA FOR OVERALL RANKS

The 2011 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the 22nd annual profile of child well-being produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. However, indicators used in the *Data Books* have changed over time, making year-to-year comparisons of state ranks problematic. This Appendix provides Overall Ranks for 2000 through 2009 for each state, using a consistent set of indicators—namely, those used to derive the rank reported in the 2011 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. This Appendix is the best source of information to see whether a particular state improved in ranking over the past few years.

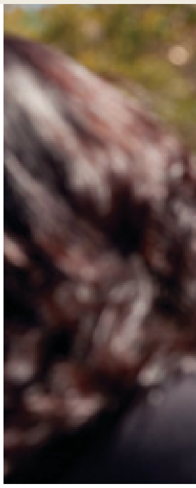
Note that state ranks in 2009 are based on data from 2007 for 3 measures, from 2008 for 2 measures, and from 2009 for the other 5 measures. In other words, data for Infant Mortality Rate, Child Death Rate, and Teen Death Rate lag 2 years behind, while Low-Birthweight Babies and Teen Birth Rate lag 1 year behind the 2009 measures.

NOTE 2008 death data were not available in time for inclusion in this report.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
AL	48	48	48	48	43	48	47	48	47	48
AK	30	38	33	36	35	38	31	35	38	32
AZ	40	39	43	41	37	36	39	40	39	37
AR	46	46	45	44	45	45	45	47	48	47
CA	20	22	18	17	18	19	22	20	19	16
CO	22	26	22	27	25	23	28	22	20	25
CT	11	7	7	11	3	3	4	4	8	6
DE	26	37	36	31	29	35	33	29	27	24
FL	35	33	35	35	33	32	35	36	35	36
GA	44	42	44	39	44	41	40	42	42	42
HI	14	21	23	24	21	11	13	18	22	26
ID	25	23	25	16	20	22	14	26	21	22
IL	29	29	30	28	24	26	24	24	24	27
IN	32	30	31	30	32	31	34	31	33	31
IA	6	6	9	9	5	7	8	6	6	8
KS	17	15	20	15	12	16	18	13	13	19
KY	37	36	39	42	42	40	41	41	40	41

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
LA	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
ME	5	8	15	7	11	15	16	12	14	11
MD	31	19	27	21	23	24	19	25	25	23
MA	8	3	3	6	10	5	3	5	5	3
MI	28	27	24	26	27	27	27	27	30	30
MN	2	2	2	3	4	1	2	2	2	2
MS	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
MO	34	34	32	33	30	34	32	33	31	34
MT	21	32	29	34	34	29	29	30	32	33
NE	10	13	10	12	8	10	9	11	9	9
NV	39	31	34	32	36	33	36	39	36	40
NH	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
NJ	9	5	5	4	7	9	6	9	7	5
NM	45	43	47	46	48	47	48	43	46	46
NY	24	25	19	22	22	18	20	17	15	15
NC	43	45	41	40	41	39	38	37	37	38
ND	7	10	4	5	9	8	7	7	12	10

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
OH	27	28	26	29	26	28	30	28	29	29
OK	41	40	40	38	40	42	43	44	44	43
OR	23	20	11	18	15	17	17	19	18	18
PA	18	17	21	25	16	21	23	23	23	20
RI	15	18	14	20	31	20	21	15	17	17
SC	47	44	46	45	47	46	46	45	45	45
SD	16	11	17	19	14	30	25	21	26	21
TN	42	47	42	43	46	43	42	46	41	39
TX	36	35	37	37	39	37	37	34	34	35
UT	4	4	8	8	6	4	5	3	4	7
VT	3	9	6	2	2	6	10	8	3	4
VA	19	16	16	13	19	14	15	16	16	14
WA	13	12	13	14	17	13	11	14	11	13
WV	38	41	38	47	38	44	44	38	43	44
WI	12	14	12	10	13	12	12	10	10	12
WY	33	24	28	23	28	25	26	32	28	28



JENNY CHIU Los Angeles, California

"My income is needed to cover all the house-hold expenses. Without these services, I can't afford [my sons'] medical expenses."

With the consequences of California's budget crisis biting into her salary and bumping up her health insurance payments, Jenny Chiu, 47, a single parent in Los Angeles County, is more thankful than ever that her two sons have affordable comprehensive public health insurance.

Matthew, 14, is covered by the Healthy Families Program, California's low-cost health insurance for children who do not qualify for the state's no-cost Medi-Cal, which Chiu's other son Milton, 11, is enrolled in because of his severe autism.

"My income is needed to cover all the household expenses. Without these services, I can't afford their medical expenses," says Chiu, manager of an adult day care center that has laid off about half of its staff and reduced the remaining staff's work hours in the wake of decreased state funding.

Family Stories

Chiu's health insurance comes from her employer—although she's recently had to pay a larger share—but her children aren't covered. She is relieved that her sons, especially Milton, have access to quality health care.

As a result of autism, Milton faces developmental challenges, including difficulty with communication and social interactions. He also suffers with gastrointestinal problems. Early intervention and special therapy have helped Milton get the most out of life.

As a toddler, he was often in the hospital. "Without Medi-Cal, I would have been under a mountain of debt," says Chiu, who contributes to the cost of Milton's care, including paying for some medication that is not covered.

Although the public health insurance is a huge help, the Chiu family is still living carefully on a tight budget. She worries about her family's financial future.

"My work is not stable due to the state budget cuts. My company is considering closing the business in the coming two months," she notes.

If Chiu loses her job, Unemployment Insurance and some savings will help, but they're not enough, she adds. "I don't know what will happen. I hope I can find another job, but now in California, it's not easy."

Practical Solutions

Ensuring access to affordable health care benefits by streamlining enrollment and eligibility procedures will allow more children to receive the care they need and help more families avoid financial crisis.

DEFINITIONS AND DATA SOURCES

Child Death Rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14) is the number of deaths to children between ages 1 and 14, from all causes, per 100,000 children in this age range. The data are reported by the place of residence, not the place where the death occurred. SOURCES: **Death Statistics:** U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. **Population Statistics:** U.S. Census Bureau.

Infant Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births) is the number of deaths occurring to infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births. The data are reported by the place of residence, not the place where the death occurred. SOURCE: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.

Overall Rank for each state was obtained in the following manner. First, we converted the 2009 (or 2007/2008, depending on the indicator) state numerical values for each of the 10 key indicators into standard scores. We then summed those standard scores to create a total standard score for each of the 50 states. Finally, we ranked the states on the basis of their total standard score in sequential order from highest/best (1) to lowest/worst (50). Standard scores were derived by subtracting the mean score from the observed score and dividing the amount by the standard deviation for that distribution of scores. All measures were given the same weight in calculating the total standard score.

Percent Change Over Time Analysis was computed by comparing the 2009 (or 2007/2008, depending on the indicator) data for 8 key indicators with the data for 2000. To calculate percent change, we subtracted the value for 2000 from the value for 2007/2008/2009 and then divided that quantity by the value for 2000. The results are multiplied by 100 for readability. The percent change was calculated on rounded data, and the "percent change" figure has been rounded to the nearest whole number. The 2009 estimates for the Percent of Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment and the Percent of Teens Not Attending School and Not Working (ages 16–19) should not be compared to estimates prior to 2008 because of substantial changes made to the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) questions on labor force participation and number of weeks worked.

Percent Low-Birthweight Babies is the percentage of live births weighing less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds). The data reflect the mother's place of residence, not the place where the birth occurred. SOURCE: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.

Percent of Children Affected by Foreclosure Since 2007 is an estimate of the percentage of children under age 18 living in a household that entered foreclosure in 2007, 2008, or 2009. Children living in rental units are not included in this analysis. SOURCES: Mortgage Bankers Association, National Delinquency Survey; and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Percent of Children in Poverty (income below $21,756 for a family of two adults and two children in 2009) is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below 100 percent of the U.S. poverty threshold, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. The federal poverty definition consists of a series of thresholds based on family size and composition and is updated every year to account for inflation. In calendar year 2009, a family of two adults and two children fell in the "poverty" category if their annual income fell below $21,756. Poverty status is not determined for people living in group quarters, such as military barracks, prisons, and other institutional quarters, or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children). The data are based on income received in the 12 months prior to the survey. SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families is the percentage of children under age 18 who live with their own single parent, either in a family or subfamily. In this definition, single-parent families may include cohabiting couples and do not include children living with married stepparents. SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Percent of Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment is the share of all children under age 18 living in families where no parent has regular, full-time employment. For children living in single-parent families, this means that the resident parent did not work at least 35 hours per week, at least 50 weeks in the 12 months prior to the survey. For children living in married-couple families, this means that neither parent worked at least 35 hours per week, at least 50 weeks in the 12 months prior to the survey. Children living with neither parent also were listed as not having secure parental employment because those children are likely to be economically vulnerable. The 2009 estimate for this measure should not be compared to estimates prior to 2008 because of substantial changes made to the 2008 American Community Survey questions on labor force participation and number of weeks worked. SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Percent of Children With at Least One Unemployed Parent is the percentage of children under age 18 living in families where at least one parent does not have a job, has actively looked for work in the past 4 weeks, and is currently available for work. Parents who are not working because they are not in the labor force are not considered unemployed. This analysis is based on children under age 18 who live with at least one parent and are not currently married. For children living in single-parent families, this means that the resident parent is unemployed. For children living in married-couple families, this means that either one or both parents are unemployed. SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

Percent of Teens Not Attending School and Not Working (ages 16–19) is the percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school (full or part time) and not employed (full or part time). This measure is sometimes referred to as "Idle Teens" or "Disconnected Youth." The 2009 estimate for this measure should not be compared to estimates prior to 2008 because of substantial changes made to the 2008 American Community Survey questions on labor force participation and number of weeks worked. SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Percent of Teens Not in School and Not High School Graduates (ages 16–19) is the percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates. Those who have a GED or equivalent are included as high school graduates in this measure. The measure used here is defined as a "status dropout" rate. Inclusion of the group quarters population to the American Community Survey (ACS) in 2006 could have a noticeable impact on the universe population for this age group. Therefore, the 2009 ACS estimate might not be fully comparable to estimates prior to 2006. SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Teen Birth Rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15–19) is the number of births to teenagers between ages 15 and 19 per 1,000 females in this age group. Data reflect the mother's place of residence, rather than the place of the birth. SOURCES: **Birth Statistics:** U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. **Population Statistics:** U.S. Census Bureau.

Teen Death Rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19) is the number of deaths from all causes to teens between ages 15 and 19, per 100,000 teens in this age group. The data are reported by the place of residence, not the place where the death occurred. SOURCES: **Death Statistics:** U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. **Population Statistics:** U.S. Census Bureau.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING KIDS COUNT INDICATORS

Over the past several years, we have developed a set of criteria to select the statistical indicators published in the national *KIDS COUNT Data Book* for the purposes of measuring change over time and ranking the states. The criteria are designed to meet our twin goals of using only the highest quality data and communicating clearly and concisely. The criteria are described below.

1. The statistical indicator must be from a reliable source. All of the indicator data used in this book come from U.S. government agencies. Most of the data have already been published or released to the public in some other form before we use them. We work with a small circle of data experts to examine and re-examine the quality of the data used in the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* each year.

2. The statistical indicator must be available and consistent over time. Changes in methodologies, practice, or policies may affect year-to-year comparability. Program and administrative data are particularly vulnerable to changes in policies and/or program administration, resulting in data that are not comparable across states or over time.

3. The statistical indicator must be available and consistent for all states. In practice, this means data collected by the federal government or some other national organization. Much of the data collected by states may be accurate and reliable and may be useful for assessing changes over time in a single state, but unless all of the states follow the same data collection and reporting procedures, the data are likely to be inconsistent across states. Without data for every state, we would not be able to construct an overall composite index of child well-being.

4. The statistical indicator should reflect a salient outcome or measure of well-being. We focus on outcome measures rather than programmatic or service data (such as dollars spent on education or welfare costs), which are not always related to the actual well-being of children. This focus reflects our ultimate aim of improving child well-being, regardless of the policies or programs used to achieve this goal.

5. The statistical indicator must be easily understandable to the public. We are trying to reach an educated lay public, not academic scholars or researchers. Measures that are too complex or esoteric cannot be communicated effectively.

6. The statistical indicator must have a relatively unambiguous interpretation. If the value of an indicator changes over time, we want to be sure there is widespread agreement that this is a good thing (or a bad thing) for kids.

7. There should be a high probability that the measure will continue to be produced in the near future. We want to establish a series of indicators that can be produced year after year to track trends in the well-being of children in each state. Therefore, we are reluctant to use data from a one-time survey, even though it may provide good information about kids.

Over the past few years, we have produced several *KIDS COUNT Working Papers* focused on the KIDS COUNT data and methodology. These are available at www.kidscount.org. For additional information on characteristics of good indicators of child well-being, see *Key Indicators of Child and Youth Well-Being: Completing the Picture*, 2008, Brett V. Brown (Ed.), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New York, NY.

Family Stories

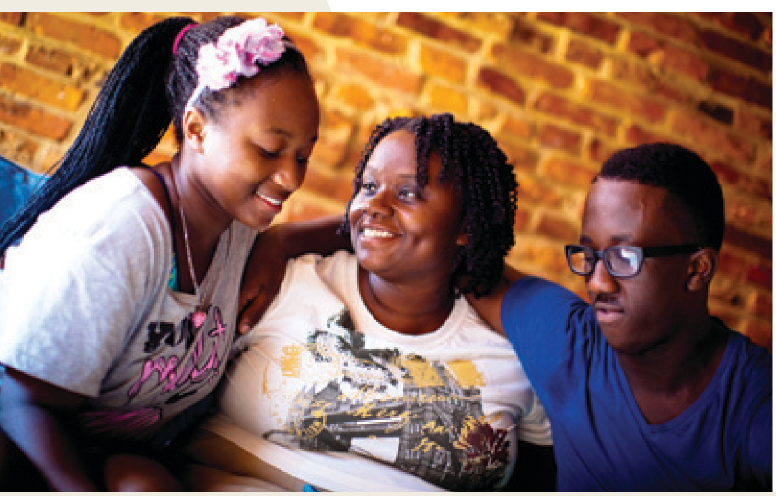
MARY KELLEY Baltimore, Maryland

"Even though the services are great, I want my kids to be in a position where they don't have to take advantage of them."

In 2008, the recession threatened to derail the ambitious plans of Mary Kelley and her two teenage children, when Kelley lost her part-time job and was unemployed for more than a year.

But thanks in part to assistance from several programs—including Unemployment Insurance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP, formerly food stamps), and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)—Kelley is now working her way through college, and her family's plans are back on track.

"If I did not have access to those services, it would have been much more difficult. We would be out on the streets or living with a family member," says Kelley, 37, of Baltimore. "I am working hard for my kids. These services really helped to further the positive things I want to do for them."



Today, Kelley is working again and finishing her bachelor's degree. She plans to teach at an elementary school, while participating next year in a teaching program for Baltimore residents. Her son Ezekiel, 18, has a scholarship to Berea College in Kentucky and plans to go on to law school. Her daughter Anna, 15, aspires to be a nurse.

"I am constantly getting them not only to dream, but to figure out a plan. If I keep instilling that, they are eventually going to move forward," explains Kelley, who works full time as a liaison for a psychiatric rehabilitation program, a job she started part time in January 2010.

"Especially with all the advances in technology happening, we need to have our future generations prepared—for the success and development of our country. They need to be healthy and well educated and to finish school. And, their parents have to be in a place where they can make those things happen."

A stay-at-home mother until her 2004 divorce, Kelley planned to work part time while pursuing a college degree to prepare for a family-supporting career. "I was kind of starting my life all over," she says. But several years later, she was laid off from a job as a mortgage company telemarketer, "because folks weren't buying homes."

Child support and student loans weren't enough. "It was really rough on the family," says Kelley. The benefits helped the family through a scary, uncertain time.

Unemployment Insurance was "extremely helpful," she says, enabling her to pay rent, "keep things on—lights, heat, water—and keep food on the table." SNAP benefits and public health insurance (the Maryland Children's Health Program for her kids, Medicaid for Kelley) also were key.

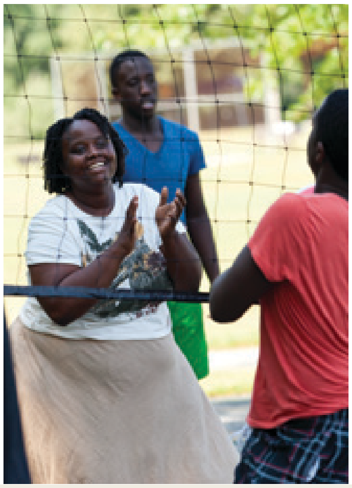
This plus the EITC also helped her set aside savings to give her son, "some money as he's going on his journey," says Kelley, who also is saving to buy a house.

"Even though the services are great, I want my kids to be in a position where they don't have to take advantage of them," she notes. "My goal is for them to finish school, work, be able to do what they want to do, be independent, and give back to the community."

Practical Solutions

Preserving and expanding the EITC will continue to lift millions of families above the poverty line and help them not only to make ends meet, but also to build savings and stabilize assets for a more secure future.






PRIMARY CONTACTS FOR STATE KIDS COUNT PROJECTS

The Annie E. Casey Foundation provides funding and technical assistance for a national network of KIDS COUNT projects in every state, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These projects, listed on the following pages, measure and report on the status of children at the state and local levels. They use the data to inform public debates and encourage public action to improve the lives of children.

The state KIDS COUNT projects publish a range of data-driven materials—state data books, special reports, issue briefs, and fact sheets—that help policymakers and citizens identify the needs of children and families and develop appropriate responses to address these needs. Much of the local-level data collected by the state KIDS COUNT grantees is available at datacenter.kidscount.org.

For more information about the network of state KIDS COUNT grantees, including mailing addresses, please visit www.kidscount.org.

Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
www.alavoices.org

Linda Tilly
Executive Director
(334) 213-2410 ext. 106
ltilly@alavoices.org

Alaska
KIDS COUNT Alaska
kidscount.alaska.edu

Virgene Hanna
Project Director
(907) 786-5431
anvh@uaa.alaska.edu

Arizona
Children's Action Alliance
www.azchildren.org

Joshua Oehler
Research Associate
(602) 266-0707 ext. 204
joehler@azchildren.org

Arkansas
Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families
www.aradvocates.org

Kim Reeve Delong
Senior Policy Analyst
(501) 371-9678 ext. 105
kreeve@aradvocates.org

California
Children Now
www.childrennow.org

Jessica Mindnich
Associate Director, Research
(510) 763-2444 ext. 115
jmindnich@childrennow.org

Colorado
Colorado Children's Campaign
www.coloradokids.org

Lisa Piscopo
Vice President of Research
(303) 620-4571
lisa@coloradokids.org

Connecticut
Connecticut Association for Human Services
www.cahs.org

Jude Carroll
Director, CT KIDS COUNT Project
(860) 951-2212 ext. 240
jcarroll@cahs.org

District of Columbia
DC Action for Children
www.dckids.org

HyeSook Chung
Executive Director
(202) 234-9404
hchung@dckids.org

Delaware
University of Delaware
www.dekidscount.org

Janice Barlow
Policy Analyst
(302) 831-3462
jls@udel.edu

Florida
Florida KIDS COUNT
www.floridakidscount.org

Susan Weitzel
Director
(813) 974-7411
weitzel@usf.edu

Georgia
Georgia Family Connection Partnership, Inc.
www.gafcp.org

Taifa Butler
Director, Policy and Communications
(404) 527-7394 ext. 136
taifa@gafcp.org

Hawaii
University of Hawaii Center on the Family
www.uhfamily.hawaii.edu

Ivette Rodriguez Stern
Hawaii KIDS COUNT Director
(808) 956-3844
istern@hawaii.edu

Idaho
Mountain States Group
www.idahokidscount.org

Lauren Necochea
KIDS COUNT Director
(208) 336-5533 ext. 246
lnecochea@mtnstatesgroup.org

Illinois
Voices for Illinois Children
www.voices4kids.org

Melissa Meighen
KIDS COUNT Project Director
(312) 516-5551
mmeighen@voices4kids.org

Indiana
Indiana Youth Institute
www.iyi.org

Sarah Patterson
Program Manager, Data
(317) 396-2715
spatterson@iyi.org

Iowa
Child & Family Policy Center
www.cfpciowa.org

Michael Crawford
Senior Associate
(515) 280-9027
mcrawford@cfpciowa.org

Kansas
Kansas Action for Children
www.kac.org

Suzanne Wikle
Director of Policy and Research
(785) 232-0550
suzanne@kac.org

Kentucky
Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc.
www.kyyouth.org

Amy Swann
KIDS COUNT Coordinator
(502) 895-8167 ext. 115
aswann@kyyouth.org

Louisiana
Agenda for Children
www.agendaforchildren.org

Teresa Falgoust
KIDS COUNT Coordinator
(504) 586-8509 ext. 117
tfalgoust@agendaforchildren.org

Maine
Maine Children's Alliance
www.mekids.org

Claire Berkowitz
Research Coordinator
(207) 623-1868 ext. 206
cberk@mekids.org

Maryland
Advocates for Children & Youth
www.acy.org

Al Passarella
Research and Policy Associate
(410) 547-9200 ext. 3012
apassarella@acy.org

Massachusetts
Massachusetts Citizens for Children
www.masskids.org

Benita Danzing
Research Director
(617) 742-8555 ext. 5
benita@masskids.org

Michigan
Michigan League for Human Services
www.milhs.org

Jane Zehnder-Merrell
KIDS COUNT Project Director
(517) 487-5436
janezm@milhs.org

Minnesota Children's Defense Fund—Minnesota www.cdf-mn.org	Kara Arzamendia *Research Director* (651) 855-1184 arzamendia@cdf-mn.org
Mississippi Social Science Research Center www.ssrc.msstate.edu	Linda Southward *MS KIDS COUNT Director* (662) 325-0851 linda.southward@ssrc.msstate.edu
Missouri Partnership for Children http://pfc.org	Jeremy LaFaver *Director of Public Policy* (816) 531-9200 lafaver@pfc.org
Montana Bureau of Business & Economic Research www.montanakidscount.org	Thale Dillon *Director* (406) 243-2780 thale.dillon@business.umt.edu
Nebraska Voices for Children in Nebraska www.voicesforchildren.com	Melissa Breazile *Research Coordinator* (402) 597-3100 mbreazile@voicesforchildren.com
Nevada Center for Business and Economic Research http://kidscount.unlv.edu	Rennae Daneshvary *Director of Nevada KIDS COUNT* (702) 895-3540 rennae.daneshvary@unlv.edu
New Hampshire Children's Alliance of New Hampshire www.childrennh.org	Ellen Fineberg *Executive Director* (603) 225-2264 efineberg@childrennh.org
New Jersey Advocates for Children of New Jersey www.acnj.org	Cecilia Zalkind *Executive Director* (973) 643-3876 czalkind@acnj.org

New Mexico
New Mexico Voices for Children
www.nmvoices.org

Christine Hollis
KIDS COUNT Director
(505) 244-9505 ext. 34
chollis@nmvoices.org

New York
New York State Council on Children & Families
www.ccf.state.ny.us

Mary DeMasi
NYS KIDS COUNT/KWIC Director
(518) 473-3652
mary.demasi@ccf.state.ny.us

North Carolina
Action for Children North Carolina
www.ncchild.org

Laila Bell
Director of Research & Data
(919) 834-6623 ext. 225
laila@ncchild.org

North Dakota
North Dakota State University
www.ndkidscount.org

Polly Fassinger
Program Director
(701) 231-5931
fassinge@cord.edu

Ohio
Children's Defense Fund Ohio
www.childrensdefense.org

Renuka Mayadev
Executive Director
(614) 221-2244
rmayadev@cdfohio.org

Oklahoma
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
www.oica.org

Erin Lamey
Research Director/KIDS COUNT Coordinator
(405) 236-5437 ext. 102
elamey@oica.org

Oregon
Children First for Oregon
www.cffo.org

Regan Gray
Policy Director
(503) 236-9754 ext. 102
regan@cffo.org

Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
www.papartnerships.org

Sandy Moore
KIDS COUNT Director
(717) 236-5680 ext. 214
smoore@papartnerships.org

Puerto Rico
National Council of La Raza
www.nclr.org

Nayda Rivera-Hernandez
Senior Research Analyst
(787) 963-0156
nrivera@nclr.org

Rhode Island
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
www.rikidscount.org

Cathy Walsh
Deputy Director
(401) 351-9400
cbwalsh@rikidscount.org

South Carolina
South Carolina Budget & Control Board
www.sckidscount.org

Baron Holmes
KIDS COUNT Project Director
(803) 898-9928
baron.holmes@ors.sc.org

South Dakota
South Dakota KIDS COUNT Project
www.sdkidscount.org

Carole Cochran
Project Director, South Dakota KIDS COUNT
(605) 677-6432
sdkidscount@usd.edu

Tennessee
Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth
www.tennessee.gov/tccy/

Pam Brown
Director, KIDS COUNT Project
(615) 532-1571
pam.k.brown@tn.gov

Texas
Center for Public Policy Priorities
www.cppp.org/kidscount.php

Frances Deviney
Texas KIDS COUNT Director/Sr. Research Associate
(512) 320-0222 ext. 106
deviney@cppp.org

U.S. Virgin Islands
CFVI, Inc.
www.cfvi.net

Dee Baecher-Brown
President
(340) 774-6031
dbrown@cfvi.net

Utah
Voices for Utah Children
www.utahchildren.org

Terry Haven
KIDS COUNT Director
(801) 364-1182
terryh@utahchildren.org

Vermont Voices for Vermont's Children www.voicesforvermontschildren.org	Nicole Mace *Research Coordinator* (802) 229-6377 nicolem@voicesforvtkids.org
Virginia Voices for Virginia's Children www.vakids.org	Hayley Cleary *KIDS COUNT Director* (804) 649-0184 ext. 22 hayley@vakids.org
Washington Children's Alliance http://childrensalliance.org	Paola Maranan *Executive Director* (206) 324-0340 ext. 16 paola@childrensalliance.org
West Virginia West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund www.wvkidscountfund.org	Margie Hale *Executive Director* (304) 345-2101 margiehale@wvkidscountfund.org
Wisconsin Wisconsin Council on Children & Families www.wccf.org	M. Martha Cranley *KIDS COUNT Coordinator* (608) 284-0580 ext. 321 mcranley@wccf.org
Wyoming Wyoming Children's Action Alliance www.wykids.com	Marc Homer *KIDS COUNT Director* (307) 460-4454 mhomer@wykids.org

ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION AND KIDS COUNT

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of UPS, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and communities fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs.

KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. At the national level, the principal activities of the initiative are the publication of the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and the maintenance of the KIDS COUNT Data Center, which use the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children. The Foundation also funds a nationwide network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that provide a more detailed, community-by-community picture of the condition of children.

Find more information at:
aecf.org/kidscount

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
701 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.547.6600
410.547.6624 fax
www.aecf.org

Visit the KIDS COUNT Data Center for multiple tools to customize and share information. *Ranking, mapping, and graphing tools* allow customization of data that can be shared and updated through social media and other web-based applications.

Find more information at:
datacenter.kidscount.org

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

701 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.547.6600
410.547.6624 fax
www.aecf.org

Access the Data Center at:
datacenter.kidscount.org