



The Annie E. Casey Foundation

MEDIA ADVISORY
For April 29, 2009

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**The Annie E. Casey Foundation Marks First 100 Days of New Administration,
Calls for Policies that Help Vulnerable Kids, Families, and Communities**

Poverty Reduction, Child Welfare Reform
Among Foundation's Policy Recommendations to New Administration

[Baltimore, MD] As the first 100 days of the new administration come to a close, the Annie E. Casey Foundation commends national leaders for policy decisions that will positively impact the well-being of children, families, and communities. Since 1948, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has been working with families, neighborhoods, advocacy organizations, and policymakers to improve outcomes for disadvantaged kids and families.

“The priorities of the Obama Administration and the 111th Congress reflect many of the ideas and programs we’ve supported over the years,” said Douglas W. Nelson, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “We’re encouraged by the progress that has been made in the first 100 days, and are confident that federal policies will continue to address the needs of vulnerable families across the country.”

The Casey Foundation acknowledges many important, family-strengthening policies that have been put in place by the new administration, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which increases access to the Child Tax Credit for low-income working families, expands the nation’s unemployment insurance system to cover more low-wage workers, and provides additional support for Head Start, formal and neighborhood-based child care, and education. The expansion of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program is an important source of health care coverage for children in low-income families – those who do not qualify for Medicaid, but are not able to afford health insurance on their own. The implementation of the Homeownership Affordability and Stability Plan will help homeowners avoid foreclosure. The Administration’s commitment to tackling concentrated poverty, including investments in rural America and the Promise Neighborhood Initiative, modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone, will provide much-needed services and supports to families in struggling communities.

Anticipating the challenges and opportunities facing President Barack Obama and the new Congress, the Casey Foundation has taken the lessons, hard data, and experiences earned from working with families, communities, and public systems over the past few decades, and translated that knowledge into concrete policy recommendations. The recommendations reflect the areas of work where the Casey Foundation has intensified its advocacy efforts, and where the Foundation has the deepest experience, the best evidence of successful strategies, and the greatest confidence about what it will take to create a more level playing field for children and families living on the economic margin:

- **Reducing poverty and promoting opportunity.** More than 37 million Americans, including 13.3 million children, live below the official poverty line. America must encompass a two-generation approach to reducing poverty and promoting opportunity that, at one level, focuses on improving the economic situation of low-income parents, and, on the second level, prepares their children for success as adults. The success of this anti-poverty agenda requires a common-sense consensus that crosses ideological and partisan lines in favor of policies that: promote workforce

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participation through increased attention to job creation and skill development; provide low-income workers with the supports they need to get and keep good jobs and build assets and savings; and equip their children with the knowledge, skills, experiences, values, and opportunities necessary to participate competitively in the new mainstream economy of the 21st Century.

- **Rebuilding the nation's child welfare system.** More than 800,000 American children spend some time in foster care each year, and far too many of these children and youth are left without the permanent, supportive family connections that every child needs to grow into a healthy and productive adult. The federal government must change its fiscal policy to better promote real permanence and improved well-being for children and youth; to incentivize innovation, evaluation, and the implementation of evidence-based policies and practices; to improve information systems to support better frontline decision-making; to improve both federal oversight and the support of state child welfare systems; and to assume a leadership role in thoughtfully addressing the pervasive racial disparities found throughout the child welfare system.
- **Reforming the nation's juvenile justice system.** Across the nation, juvenile courts and corrections systems are littered with poorly conceived strategies that unnecessarily confine young people, expose them to danger, diminish their future prospects, increase crime, waste hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, and violate principles about equal justice under the law. The system needs immediate attention to reduce wasteful, counterproductive over-reliance on incarceration and detention; redirect resources into proven strategies that cost less, enhance public safety, and increase the odds of success of young people involved in the juvenile courts; reduce racial disparities; and combat abuse in juvenile facilities.
- **Improving the nation's data on children and families.** Good decisions are based on good information, and a hallmark of the Casey Foundation's approach to helping children and families succeed is using sound data to advocate for and to evaluate change. Ensuring that the nation has the best information to inform policy decisions affecting children and families means updating the U.S. poverty measure; improving the availability, timeliness, and quality of state and local data on child well-being; supporting efforts to collect complete and uniform data from birth and death certificates; and fully funding and properly managing the 2010 Census.

"As the nation enters this next phase, it is critical that federal and state policies increasingly incorporate proven strategies that we know will work, and reject the ineffective, costly practices that don't," continued Nelson. "The Casey Foundation is also committed to working with federal, state, and local leaders to ensure that new and realigned resources are directed at the people and places most in need."

A special policy issue of the Foundation's *Casey Connects* newsletter "Helping Families Succeed: Federal Policy Opportunities," along with issue briefs on reducing poverty and promoting opportunity; reforming the child welfare system; rebuilding the juvenile justice system; and improving the nation's data on children and families, are available at www.aecf.org.

To arrange an interview, or for more information about the Foundation's policy priorities, please contact Marci Bransdorf at 301.257.7348 / marcibransdorf@gmail.com or Tiffany Thomas Smith at 410.223.2980 / media@aecf.org.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for children in the United States. Based in Baltimore, MD, 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. For more information, visit www.aecf.org.