

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Data Spotlights Gaps in Opportunity for Kids and Families of Color
State and National Data Unveiled by the Annie E. Casey Foundation at UNITY '08 Convention

CHICAGO — On Thursday, July 24, 2008 the Annie E. Casey Foundation will announce the first ever comprehensive, state-level data on kids and families in the five largest racial and ethnic groups at a press conference being held at the McCormick Place Convention Center during the UNITY: Journalists of Color 2008 convention.

For the first time, journalists will be able to access comprehensive state-level data on kids and families in the largest racial and ethnic groups – African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and Non-Hispanic White. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Center (www.aecf.org/kidscount) now includes ten key measures of well-being for each group in the areas of health, education, employment, and poverty. Visitors to the KIDS COUNT website can also access national and state-level statistics for all kids and families from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and 55 large U.S. cities. The KIDS COUNT Data Center can be used to create customized reports, maps and trend lines that profile, rank and compare states.

“All children deserve a chance to thrive, but not all kids have the same opportunity to achieve success. Making this data available will help us ensure that issues that disproportionately affect children and families of color are not ignored as we work toward better futures for all children,” says Laura Beavers, National KIDS COUNT Coordinator for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “The trends show that improvements for kids across racial lines and in most states have stalled since the late 1990s. The data reveal that children of color continue to face disproportionately more obstacles than other children.”

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 19th annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* was released on June 12. Key findings in the report show trends in child well-being are not on par with the improvements seen at the end of the 1990s, with more children living in relative poverty in the United States than in any other economically advanced nation. Among the negative trends: the percent of babies born at low-birthweight continues to increase, with the 2005 rate the highest reported since 1968. The number of children who live in poverty, with single parents, or with parents facing persistent unemployment also increased from 2000 to 2006. Among the positive trends: the high school dropout rate has fallen significantly from 2000 to 2006, the teen birth rate in 2005 continued to go down, and the death rate for youth ages 15 to 19 continues to decline.

Casey's companion essay, “A Road Map for Juvenile Justice Reform,” discusses developments in the nation's juvenile justice systems, highlighting action steps and model programs with potential to change how these systems treat the nearly 100,000 youth confined in juvenile facilities on any given night. The essay makes the case for keeping youth out of the adult justice system, reducing incarceration, ensuring safe institutions, and eliminating racially disparate treatment.

State-level data on children and families of color, the 2008 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, and “A Road Map for Juvenile Justice Reform,” the 2008 KIDS COUNT Essay, are available online at www.aecf.org/kidscount.

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization, whose primary mission 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.