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CONTACT: Lucille Renwick | 917-326-2643 | lrenwick@fenton.com
Beau Boughamer | 410-458-5018 | media@aecf.org

2018 KIDS COUNT Data Book Fact Sheet

BALTIMORE — The 2018 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* focuses on trends in child well-being over the last six years (roughly 2010–16) — a period that saw continued improvement in Economic Well-Being but mixed results in the Health, Education, and Family and Community domains.

This year's *Data Book* shows that the child poverty rate, which peaked at 23 percent in 2011, was down to 19 percent in 2016 with close to 1.6 million fewer children living in poverty. This data also showed the teen birth rate at an all-time low and the rate of high school students graduating on time at an all-time high. Still, levels of children living in poverty and in high-poverty neighborhoods were unacceptably high and African-American, American Indian, Latino and Southeast Asian children still are at greater risk of experiencing poverty as their white peers. Discrepancies persist for these children in almost every indicator in the *Data Book*.

The 16 KIDS COUNT Index Indicators From 2010–16

Four domains comprise the KIDS COUNT index*, which is a concise means of tracking child well-being to easily pinpoint concerns and initiate policy solutions. These domains are (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. Each domain includes four indicators, for a total of 16. These indicators represent the best available data to measure the status of child well-being nationally and in states.

Economic Well-Being

- Percentage of children in poverty (income of \$24,339 for a family of two adults and two children in 2016)
- Percentage of children whose parents lack secure employment (no full-time, year-round work)
- Percentage of children living in households with a high housing cost burden (spend more than 30 percent of pretax income on housing)
- Percentage of teens not in school and not working (ages 16–19)

Education

- Percentage of young children not in school (ages 3–4)
- Percentage of fourth-graders not proficient in reading
- Percentage of eighth-graders not proficient in math
- Percentage of high school students not graduating on time

Health*

- Percentage of low birth-weight babies
- Percentage of children without health insurance
- Rate of child and teen deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–19*
- Percentage of teens who abuse alcohol or drugs (ages 12–17)*

Family and Community

- Percentage of children living in single-parent families
- Percentage of children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma
- Percentage of children living in high-poverty areas
- Rate of teen births per 1,000 females ages 15–19

National Trends Since 2010

Comparing data over the last six years reveals positive and negative developments in child well-being nationally. Broadly speaking, children experienced gains in Economic Well-Being and mixed results in Education, Health and Family and Community domains.

Economic Well-Being:

All four Economic Well-Being indicators improved in this year's *Data Book*. The child poverty rate dropped to 19 percent having risen to 23 percent four years ago. In fact, 2016 saw the largest single-year decline since the recession. Across the nation, 32 percent of children (23.6 million) lived in families with a high housing cost burden in 2016, compared with 41 percent (30.1 million) in 2010. The percentage of families with disproportionately high housing costs peaked in 2010, at the height of the foreclosure crisis, and has since steadily declined. The rate was below prerecession levels but continued to be much higher than it was in 1990.

Education:

As noted, the U.S. high school graduation rate was at an all-time high in 2016. Improvements in other indicators in the Education domain have been minimal or nonexistent. Two-thirds of children did not read at grade level by the fourth grade and two-thirds of children were not proficient in math by the eighth grade. Only 48 percent of children ages 3–4 in the U.S. were enrolled in school, the third-lowest percentage among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.

Health:

Poor health in childhood affects other critical aspects of a child's life, such as school readiness and attendance, and can have lasting consequences on his or her future health and well-being. Since the passage of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the Affordable Care Act, only 4 percent of children lacked health insurance in 2016. This rate has fallen by half since 2010. The percentage of babies with low birth weight and rates of child and teen deaths remained relatively stable from 2010–16.

Family and Community:

Trends in the Family and Community domain were mixed. The teen birth rate continued its dramatic decline, reaching a new all-time low. And a smaller percentage of children were living with parents who lacked a high school diploma. The percentage of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods remained relatively unchanged from between 2010–16.

Racial and Ethnic Gaps in Child Well-Being

Despite gains for children of all races and income levels during the economic recovery, inequities remained deep and stubbornly persistent. On nearly all the measures that KIDS COUNT tracks, African-American, American Indian, Latino and Southeast Asian children continued to fare worse than their peers. A few notable exceptions: African-American kids were more likely than the national average to be in school as young children and to live in families in which the head of the household has a high school diploma. American Indian families with children were less likely to be burdened with high housing costs, and American Indian and Latino kids were more likely to be born at a healthy birth weight. Latino children and teens also had a lower death rate than the national average.

State Rankings

The *Data Book* composite index of overall child well-being combines data across the four domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. The composite scores are translated into a single state ranking which is used to rank states on how children are faring. All indicators are equally weighted in the domain and overall rankings.

Top Five States Overall: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Minnesota, Iowa

Bottom Five States Overall: Alaska, Nevada, Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico

Economic Well-Being: Top five states: North Dakota, Nebraska[†], New Hampshire, Iowa, Minnesota

Bottom five states: Arizona[‡], West Virginia[‡], Mississippi, New Mexico, Louisiana

Education: Top five states: New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont
Bottom five states: Oklahoma[‡], Louisiana, Alaska, Nevada, New Mexico

Health: Top five states: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Washington
Bottom five states: Montana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Wyoming, Alaska

Family and Community: Top five states: Utah, New Hampshire, Vermont, North Dakota, Minnesota
Bottom five states: Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Mississippi

**Note on comparing this year's overall and health rankings to previous years: The data collection methodology for the teen alcohol and drug use indicator changed. Therefore, comparisons between the 2018 Overall and Health indicators and rankings should not be made to previous years. Whether a change in ranking is due to this methodological change or real changes in child well-being cannot be determined.*

[†]*not in top five in the domain last year*

[‡]*not in bottom five in the domain last year*

Note on data sources: The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses the most up-to-date estimates from federal statistical agencies including the U.S. Census Bureau, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Center for Education Statistics and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. For more information, see the Definitions and Data Sources section at www.aecf.org/databook

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The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* with state-by-state rankings and supplemental data is embargoed until 12:01 a.m. EDT, June 27, 2018, and can be viewed at www.aecf.org/databook at that time. Users can download the complete *Data Book* and access hundreds of other measures of child well-being by visiting the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.