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Contact: Marci Bransdorf, 410.223.2852 or
Sue Lin Chong, 410.223.2836

Updated Online Report Tracks U.S. Birth Information Across States and 50 Largest Cities

BALTIMORE – The online report, *The Right Start for America's Newborns: City and State Trends*, has been updated to include 2002 data, adding to the birth information the report has tracked yearly since 1990. Nationally, five of the eight measures improved from 1990 to 2002, although huge disparities persist across cities and states.

The conditions under which infants are born can have lifelong effects on the child's development and readiness for school. Specifically, low-birthweight and preterm infants are at increased risk for developmental delays that can affect their chances of being left behind in school. The measures tracked in *The Right Start* are intended to provide policymakers, child advocates, and others with data that reflect conditions prior to birth, a newborn's health status at birth, and maternal characteristics that are associated with a child's educational and social outcomes.

Based on data from the National Center for Health Statistics, the report ranks the 50 largest cities and all states based on best and worst performance on each of these eight measures:

- births to teens;
- births to teens who were already mothers;
- births to unmarried women;
- births to mothers with less than 12 years of education;
- births to mothers receiving late or no prenatal care;
- births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy;
- low-birthweight births (less than 5.5 pounds); and
- preterm births (less than 37 weeks of gestation).

The report also includes national, state, and city-level data on total births by race and ethnicity. Nationally, the data reveals a significant increase in births to Hispanic women and a decline in African American births since 1990.

The report is available at www.aecf.org/kidscount/rightstart2005. The online format allows viewers to create custom reports such as state and city profiles, line graphs showing trends over time, color-coded U.S. maps, and ranking tables, all generated from *The Right Start* database. *The Right Start* is a joint project of KIDS COUNT, an initiative of The Annie E. Casey Foundation located in Baltimore, MD, and Child Trends, a research organization located in Washington, DC.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a data-driven, private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children, families, and communities in the United States. For more information, please visit www.aecf.org.