



**Media Coverage of the 2005 KIDS COUNT Data Book**

**By**

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## Media Coverage of the 2005 KIDS COUNT Data Book

### Executive Summary

Hager Sharp is pleased to share the results of the media release of the 2005 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. Promotion of the July 27th release of the 16<sup>th</sup> annual *Data Book*, featuring the essay, “Helping Our Most Vulnerable Families Overcome Barriers to Work and Achieve Financial Success,” generated more than 214 million media impressions.

The following report is an analysis of media coverage, focusing specifically on print coverage. Key findings of the analysis include:

- Release of the 2005 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* resulted in 981 known print stories, reaching more than 60 million potential readers. (Note: This report is based on print news clips received as of September 20.)
- The KIDS COUNT story appeared in newspapers in every state except Hawaii and Idaho, major national wire services carried it, and top circulating dailies in the nation, including the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, covered it.
- National Associated Press (AP) coverage resulted in 117 stories across the country.
- A high percentage of stories (40 percent) mention the “persistent unemployment” theme. This rate, however, was slightly lower than the percentage of stories that mentioned “disconnected young adults” in 2004 (54 percent).
- Nearly 50 percent of unique stories were editorials, columns, or op-eds. These types of pieces give weight to the issue and reach key influencers and policy-makers.
- The right-hand page indicators with the most coverage this year are child poverty, high school dropouts, and teen birth rate, while idle teens had the least coverage.
- The KIDS COUNT story aired 560 times on television, on 236 stations, in 127 markets. Total viewership was more than 19 million.
- Radio networks that aired KIDS COUNT stories include: Voice of America, NPR’s Morning Edition, AP Radio, CBS Radio, USA Radio Network, and CNN Radio. Voice of America reaches a potential audience of 100 million listeners worldwide. Promotion of a 50-state audio bite-line yielded more than 1,240 radio stories.
- 8,000 Internet users visited the KIDS COUNT Web site during the day of the release and more than 28,000 users visited during the week of the release.

Analysis of the 2005 media strategy reinforces the importance of state-by-state approach, a theme strongly connected to the data, state experts, and presentation of state

## **Media Coverage of the 2005 KIDS COUNT Data Book**

### **Introduction:**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has released an annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* every year since 1990. This paper analyzes the media coverage that accompanied the report's most recent release on July 27, 2005.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses the best available state-level data to measure the social, economic, and physical well-being of children. Every year, 10 (right-hand page) indicators are tracked and used to rank states on overall child well-being. Other measures (left-hand page indicators) give more context and often link to the theme of the report.

This year's essay theme, written by Casey Foundation President Doug Nelson, is "Helping Our Most Vulnerable Families Overcome Barriers to Work and Achieve Financial Success." It highlights the growing number of children living in families where no adult worked in the past year. The risk factors for persistent unemployment highlighted in the essay included domestic violence, substance abuse, prior incarceration, and depression.

A media relations strategy targeting local and national print, TV, radio and Web outlets resulted in more than 214 million media impressions, with a significant increase in radio coverage over the past year. Only print coverage is examined in this paper.

### **Dissemination Strategies:**

The Foundation produced and distributed 65,000 copies of the 2005 edition of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. State and local leaders received about one-third through state KIDS COUNT grantees, national organizations received about one-third through Dissemination Partners (listed in the back of the *Data Book*). Members of Congress received copies in their home district offices as well as across Capitol Hill where it was accompanied by a "Dear Colleague" letter from a pair of senators and a pair of representatives. The media received the remainder along with anyone requesting a copy, available free of charge. In addition, the report was posted on the KIDS COUNT Web site ([www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org)). The package of printed materials included the KIDS COUNT Pocket Guide, Data Wheel, and Essay Booklet.

The media campaign for the release of the 2005 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* alerted media and policy makers at federal, state and local levels. In advance of the release date, a series of press advisories went to more than 2,000 members of the media around the country, and we sent complete media kits and books to nearly 800 reporters. Many more reporters received the media materials electronically. Media materials included a national news release and fact sheet, as well as a set of state releases, fact sheets, and state-specific charts for almost every state.

One distinctive feature of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the state-level data provided in the report. The data, along with the efforts of the state grantees to drive coverage by giving the story a local angle, contribute enormously to our yearly media success. More than half (30) of the state KIDS COUNT grantees provided their own press releases, which were included in the state media kits, distributed electronically by Hager Sharp upon request from media, and distributed directly by the grantee. Nearly 50 percent of the unique print stories contained a quote from a state KIDS COUNT grantee.

Also in preparation for the release, state grantees recorded radio actualities, and we collaborated with Home Front to produce a video news feed (VNF) and promote it to local TV stations in all 50 states. Hager Sharp coordinated interviews with *Data Book* co-authors Bill O’Hare and Laura Beavers—as well as for Doug Nelson and state grantees—for hundreds of media outlets during the days leading up to the release. A password-protected copy of the report was available under embargo to the media on the KIDS COUNT Web site two weeks prior to the release date.

Continuing our Capitol Hill dissemination strategy from the past two years, U.S. Senate members received the *Data Book* along with a “Dear Colleague” letter from Senators John D. Rockefeller (D-WV) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME), while House members received it with a letter from Representatives Jim McDermott (D-WA) and Wally Herger (R-CA). (McDermott replaced Ben Cardin this year because Cardin, who co-signed the House letter for the past two years with Herger, no longer serves on the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources.) Additionally, we mailed books and media kits to the 1,400-plus district offices of all 535 members of Congress with a letter from Casey Foundation President Doug Nelson. Additional mailings targeted governors, lieutenant governors, governors’ press secretaries, attorneys general, and the heads of state health and human services agencies.

Other national reports of child well-being were also released in July. To make sure the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* stood out prominently among those reports, Hager Sharp coordinated a pre-release media briefing for selected national reporters in Washington, D.C. Doug Nelson and Bill O’Hare presented the report’s findings to *Washington Times* columnist Adrienne Washington, *Washington Post* deputy editorial page editor Colbert King, *Governing Magazine*’s Josh Goodman, *Child Health Talk*’s Stacey Cunningham, and National Public Radio’s Rachel Jones.

### **Print Coverage Analysis:**

The analyses of the print coverage of 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 *KIDS COUNT Data Books* provided us with a clear picture of how media covers the issues related to child well-being featured in the report. This paper analyzes the newspaper articles that were generated by the release of the 2005 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, including the essay and data since 2000.

All newspaper stories mentioning the 2005 *Data Book* after the release on July 27, 2005, were obtained through a major clipping service (Burrelle’s). We systematically categorized these stories along several different dimensions and then analyzed them to answer several key coverage questions. Because radio and television transcripts are significantly harder to track, this analysis is limited to print coverage.

Release of the 2005 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* resulted in 981 known print stories (as of September 20, 2005), with the potential to reach more than 60 million readers. For the print analysis, we examined each article and coded several dimensions that we then entered into a database. Dimensions coded are shown in Table 1.

<b>Table 1: Dimensions Coded for Each Newspaper Article</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the newspaper is published,</li> <li>• Circulation of the newspaper,</li> <li>• Whether the story ran on the front page,</li> <li>• Type of story,</li> <li>• Content of headlines,</li> <li>• Whether rankings or trends were mentioned,</li> <li>• Who was quoted,</li> <li>• Overall tone of the story/emphasis on positives or negatives in the indicators and trend lines,</li> <li>• Which indicators were mentioned, and</li> <li>• Whether key points from the news release were mentioned.</li> </ul>

Overall, newspaper stories appeared in every state except Hawaii and Idaho. Some of the largest publications in the country, as well as some of the smallest, covered the story. Table 2 shows the circulation of the 10 largest papers carrying a KIDS COUNT story. These 10 papers account for nearly 24 percent of the potential newsprint audience. Last year’s top 10 papers accounted for 23 percent of newspaper audience.

<b>Table 2: Largest Papers with KIDS COUNT Stories</b>		
<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Circulations</b>	<b>Type of Story</b>
USA Today	2,309,853	Local Original
Wall Street Journal	2,106,774	Other (Front Page News Flash)
Washington Post	1,000,565 (x2)	Local Original and Column
Dallas Morning News	596,616 (x2)	Local Original and other
Houston Chronicle	554,783	State AP
Newsday (Nassau Edition)	553,117	Local Original
Arizona Republic	530,751 (x5)	Local Originals and Nat. AP
Baltimore Sun	467,911 (x3)	Local Originals and Editorial (3 stories)
St. Louis Post Dispatch	449,845	Local Original
<b>Total in Top 10:</b>	<b>13,706,809</b>	

We categorized stories into the five types shown in Table 3. National Associated Press (AP) stories appear in newspapers across the country and are pulled down from the national wire. This year, Kevin Freking from the Washington Bureau wrote a general *KIDS COUNT Data Book* story featuring information pulled from the KIDS COUNT national press release and interviews with Doug Nelson and Bill O’Hare. This story appeared in 117 newspapers across the country.

State wire stories are distributed through the state bureaus of the AP or other news organizations such as Reuters or Knight-Ridder. Local newspapers throughout a given state reproduce these state wire stories more or less unedited in their local editions. Local stories are written by staff writers of local newspapers or by a local contributor to the paper. These stories were very rarely reproduced.

Editorials are considered as a separate type of story although they otherwise fit the definition of a local story. Editorials, which in this analysis included op-eds, columns, and editorial page comments, give a different kind of attention to a story and are perceived differently by readers. Letters to the editor and other stories that did not fit into the above categories, such as infographs or news flashes (“blurbs”), were grouped into the category of “Other Stories.”

**Table 3.**  
**KIDS COUNT—Related Stories by Type of Story, 2005**

<b>Type of story</b>	<b>All Stories:</b>		<b>Unique Stories:</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
AP National	117	12%	1	<1%
State News Service Story	349	35%	51	14%
Local Story	236	24%	103	30%
Editorial	226	23%	165	48%
Other	56	6%	26	7%
<b>Total</b>	981		347	

As the above table indicates, there are two ways to count stories. One looks at all stories and the other looks only at stories that are unique, regardless of the number of times reproduced. The distribution of story types looks very different from a reader's perspective (All Stories) than from a reporter's perspective (Unique Stories). From a reader's perspective, the State News Service and national AP stories dominate. Since so many of the 981 stories are simply the same story appearing in several papers, we eliminated redundant stories—and for the purpose of this analysis—also focused on the content of the 347 unique stories in order to determine how reporters interpret what is newsworthy about the KIDS COUNT release.

In 2005, State News Service stories accounted for nearly 35 percent of all stories, while the national AP story accounted for 12 percent of all stories (combined they account for more than 47 percent of the print coverage). Looking only at unique stories, however, those highly reproduced stories account for just 15 percent of the print coverage. Locally generated stories and editorials together accounted for 47 percent of all stories, but more than 78 percent of unique stories. Other stories accounted for a very small percent.

### **Distribution by State:**

One of the most distinctive features of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the state focus from the state-level data provided in the report. The state-level attention generated by the data is enhanced and bolstered by state-level KIDS COUNT grantees, who often promote media coverage of the national *Data Book*. Given the state focus of KIDS COUNT, it is important to look at the distribution of news stories across the states.

Table 4 shows the number of print stories in each state. In 2005, the top 11 states (based on total number of all stories published there) were: Indiana, Michigan, Arizona, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, South Carolina, Iowa, and Alabama. Arizona newspapers carried the highest number of unique stories (25). The states with the fewest number of KIDS COUNT stories appearing in their newspapers were primarily smaller and/or less populous states including: Alaska, Rhode Island, Delaware, Colorado, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and South Dakota.

**Table 4.  
Number of Total Print Stories and Unique Print Stories by State, 2005**

<b>State</b>	<b>All Stories, 2005</b>	<b>Unique Stories, 2005</b>
Alabama	30	14
Alaska	1	1
Arizona	47	25
Arkansas	14	7
California	15	4
Colorado	3	1
Connecticut	12	5
Delaware	3	2
Florida	16	7
Georgia	14	11
Hawaii	0	0
Idaho	0	0
Illinois	30	5
Indiana	54	13
Iowa	33	9
Kansas	30	11
Kentucky	41	20
Louisiana	31	17
Maine	14	7
Maryland	9	3
Massachusetts	4	2
Michigan	49	6
Minnesota	6	2
Mississippi	27	11
Missouri	10	4
Montana	11	3
Nebraska	5	3
Nevada	7	4
New Hampshire	16	5
New Jersey	23	4
New Mexico	16	10
New York	17	3
North Carolina	46	9
North Dakota	6	3
Ohio	25	5
Oklahoma	27	7
Oregon	11	3
Pennsylvania	20	6
Rhode Island	4	2
South Carolina	41	17
South Dakota	12	3
Tennessee	43	19
Texas	21	9
Utah	8	5
Vermont	14	5
Virginia	15	3
Washington	18	6
West Virginia	34	13
Wisconsin	35	4
Wyoming	7	3
District of Columbia	6	6
Virgin Islands	0	0
National Publications	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>347</b>

**Experts Featured in KIDS COUNT Coverage:**

When it comes to featuring experts in *Data Book*-related print stories, KIDS COUNT state grantees run the show. This year, 480 of all stories included a quote from a KIDS COUNT grantee, while 168 stories quoted Casey Foundation President Doug Nelson (primarily reruns of the national AP story). KIDS COUNT Coordinator Bill O’Hare was quoted in 45 stories. Other people quoted (featured in 444 total articles) include KIDS COUNT spokespeople Laura Beavers, federal officials (such as Wade Horn, who oversees the Administration for Children and Families), directors of state or community health agencies, state government officials, and local youth. More than 800 stories mentioned KIDS COUNT and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Only 140 mentioned the Web site.

**Persistent Unemployment:**

The Foundation’s focus on persistent unemployment was picked up in nearly half of the print coverage of the 2005 *Data Book*. Of the 347 unique articles, 121 of them (35 percent) discussed difficulties faced by families struggling to connect to the work force. Of the 981 total articles, 394 articles –or 40 percent– discussed persistent unemployment.

The essay focused on four risk barriers to employment: domestic violence, prior incarceration, substance abuse and depression. Of these risk factors, domestic violence and substance abuse were mentioned most often (see Table 5).

	<b>All</b>	<b>Unique</b>
Domestic Violence	21%	15%
Prior Incarceration	18%	14%
Substance Abuse	21%	13%
Depression	15%	11%

The report included data on how many children lived in families where no adult worked in the past year. The data appeared in many of the articles. One hundred-eighty articles mentioned that nearly 4 million children lived in families struggling with persistent unemployment and 174 stories reported an increase in the number of kids in these families since 2000. Of the stories that mentioned the theme, nearly half included the national number with 44 percent including the state’s share of persistently

unemployed families. Only 46 stories mentioned any solutions for helping families disconnected from the work force.

The national press release also stressed the overall downturn in child well-being since 2000, including the increase in child poverty. This was reflected in the media analysis. Negative trends were frequently covered, although only 23 of the articles specifically stated a downturn in the five indicators nationally.

**Rankings:**

Ranking states is the hallmark of KIDS COUNT. Although not all coverage focuses on state rankings, nearly 66 percent of the 2005 unique stories mention a state’s composite rank. A much lower number of stories mention change in rank (71 of the unique stories detail progress or set-backs in states’ ranks). This year, stories were more likely to mention a state's rank rather than its trend in the headline (a reverse from last year). Of those stories that mentioned a rank in the headline, the majority focused on a negative ranking. Of those that focused on trend, the majority stressed downward turns. This is a change from last year, where improvements were more likely to be highlighted. “KIDS COUNT” appeared in the headline of 80 total stories, while the “Casey Foundation” appeared in only one.

<b>Table 6. Mention of State’s Rank and State’s Trend in KIDS COUNT 2005 news stories</b>		
	<b>Mentioned in headline</b>	
	<b>All</b>	<b>Unique</b>
Rank	17%	16%
Trend	10%	11%

**Indicators:**

The heart of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the 10 indicators of child well-being that are provided for each state and then used to rank states. The 10 indicators are listed in Table 7a, which also shows how many times each of the 10 key KIDS COUNT indicators were mentioned in the story. Many stories covered several of the indicators.

The right-hand page indicators with the most coverage this year are child poverty, high school dropout, and teen birth rate, while idle teens had the least coverage. Table 7b features data on use of indicators found in the unique stories.

**Table 7a.**  
**Numbers of Times Key Indicators Were Mentioned in Body of Stories:**  
**All Stories 2005**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Mentioned in Body of Story</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Total Stories	981	100%
Low-Birthweight Babies	327	33%
Infant Mortality Rate	443	15%
Child Death Rate	301	31%
Teen Death Rate	301	31%
Teen Birth Rate	477	49%
High School Dropouts	539	55%
Idle Teens	175	18%
No Secure Parental Employment	323	33%
Child Poverty	568	58%
Single-Parent Families	443	45%

Table 7b. Numbers of Times Key Indicators Were Mentioned in Body of Stories:  
Unique Stories 2005

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Mentioned in body of story</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Total Stories	347	100%
Low-Birthweight Babies	134	39%
Infant Mortality Rate	164	47%
Child Death Rate	139	40%
Teen Death Rate	126	36%
Teen Birth Rate	148	43%
High School Dropouts	178	51%
Idle Teens	78	22%
No Secure Parental Employment	135	39%
Child Poverty	201	58%
Single-Parent Families	124	36%

## **Conclusion:**

The 2005 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* media strategy yielded higher numbers of media impressions than the successful 2004, 2003 and 2002 strategies, due in large part to the increase in radio coverage. The print coverage spanned a range of topics, while frequently including the essay's theme, the overall downturn in child well-being, and the increase in child poverty.

Our analysis of the 2005 media strategy reinforces the importance of state-by-state approach with data and experts, a child-specific theme, and presentation of national and state trends.

## APPENDIX A – Comparative Figures for Each Year, 2002 - 2005

Year	2005	2004	2003	2002
Total number of print articles	981	1160	917	753
Number of unique articles	347	391	276	244
Total readership	60 million	67 million	46 million	41 million
Rate of “theme” focus: total stories	40% mention “persistently unemployed parents”	54% mention “disconnected young adults”	14% mention “high cost of being poor”	N/A
Rate of “theme” focus: unique stories	35% mention “persistently unemployed parents”	38% mention “disconnected young adults”	14% mention “high cost of being poor”	46% mention “low income working families”

- In 2002 and 2003, the release of the KIDS COUNT Data Book generated a large number of newspaper articles, and information from the report reached more than 40 million potential readers each year. In 2004, the release of the KIDS COUNT Data Book exceeded expectations and generated more than 67 million potential readers. In 2005, the release generated more than 60 million potential readers. (Note: Earlier releases occurred in late May or early June, while the 2005 release occurred in late July, just one week after the release of a federal report on child well-being.)

Year	2005	2004	2003	2002
Number of Airings	559	509	625	462
Stations	236	245	294	221
Markets	127	105	131	113
Viewers	19,804,561	16,298,976	21,585,588	17,679,297

- The 2005 video news feed generated 559 stories on national and local television news across the country. This impressive number is higher than the 2004 and 2002 release, but lower than the 2003 release. This figure also doesn’t include the KIDS COUNT mention on NBC’s Tonight Show with Jay Leno, which reaches an additional audience of 4,747,270 viewers.

<b>Table A3 – Radio Coverage</b>				
Year	2005	2004	2003	2002
Number of radio stations	More than 1,370	More than 900	More than 150	More than 600
Number of listeners	138 million	10 million	N/A	4 million

- Radio is the biggest success story of this year’s KIDS COUNT release. With increased use of the audio bite-line, more live and taped interviews with Casey and state spokespeople, and better ability to monitor radio coverage, we tallied an enormous spike in radio impressions. That noted, tracking radio is still far more difficult than tracking print or television coverage. For this reason, the figures in the above table are estimates and highly unreliable.
- This year, Hager Sharp coordinated an interview with Voice of America, the global broadcasting system that reaches 100 million listeners worldwide (which accounts for the majority of radio impressions). Many radio networks also covered the 2005 release. Radio networks include: AP Radio, CNN Radio, CBS Radio, National Public Radio, USA Radio Networks, and many state radio networks.
- The 50-state audio bite-line produced and promoted for the 2005 release was a huge success, generating an estimated 1,240 radio stories featuring sound-bites from state grantees and/or Bill O’Hare.

<b>Table A4 – Web Site Activity</b>				
Year	2005	2004	2003	2002
Visitors on day of the release	8,000	8,000	10,000	7,500
Visitors during the week of release	28,133	25,000	30,000	22,000
Visitors during the month of release	92,652 (Jul 24 – Aug 24)	81,736	74,605	N/A
Total visitors during the year	785,000*	775,000	770,000	740,000

\*estimated through end of 2005

- There is clear evidence that release of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* drew people to the Web site. There were about 8,000 visitors during the day of the release of the 2005 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and more than 28,000 during the week of the release.