



**MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE
2004 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK**

By

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Executive Summary

Hager Sharp is pleased to share the results of the media release strategy for the 2004 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. Promotion of the June 3rd release of the annual *Data Book*, featuring the “Moving Youth from Risk to Opportunity” essay, generated over 93 million media impressions. News about the *Data Book* appeared on television, radio, the Web, and in newspapers in every state.

The following report details the results of the post-release analysis of media coverage, focusing specifically on print coverage. Key findings of the analysis include:

- Release of the 2004 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* resulted in over 1,160 known print stories, reaching over 67 million potential readers.
- The KIDS COUNT story appeared in newspapers in every state and in the Virgin Islands, was carried on major national wire services, and was covered by *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*.
- National Associated Press (AP) coverage resulted in 290 stories across the country.
- The majority of stories (54 percent) mention the “disconnected young adults” theme. In 2003, 14 percent of stories featured the “high cost of being poor” theme.
- 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. Editorials accounted for 41 percent of unique stories in 2003.
- The right-hand page indicators with the most coverage this year are infant mortality, child poverty, and high school dropouts, while idle teens had the least coverage.
- The KIDS COUNT story aired 509 times on television, on 245 stations, in 105 markets. Total viewer ship was more than 16 million.
- Radio networks that aired KIDS COUNT stories include: NPR’s Morning Edition, AP Radio, and CNN Radio. Promotion of a 50-state audio bite-line yielded over 800 radio stories.
- 8,000 Internet users visited the KIDS COUNT Web site during the day of the release, and nearly 25,000 users visited during the week of the release.

Analysis of the 2004 media strategy reinforces the importance of a state-by-state approach, a theme strongly connected to the data, state experts, and presentation of state and national trends.

Media Coverage of the 2004 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 June 3, 2004.

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 "Moving Youth from Risk to Opportunity." It highlights the growing number of "disconnected" young adults—18 to 24-year-olds who lack employment or post-high school education—and the risk factors that put teens on that track. The risk factors highlighted in the essay included teen parenting, dropping out of high school, and involvement with the juvenile justice and foster care systems.

A media relations strategy targeting local and national print, TV, radio and Web outlets resulted in more than 93 million media impressions, including 17 percent increase in the number of print articles, compared to the year before. Only print coverage is examined in this paper.

Dissemination Strategies:

The Foundation produced and distributed 60,000 copies of the 2004 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*), and the media received the remainder along with anyone requesting a copy, available free of charge. In addition, the report was available on the KIDS COUNT Web site (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 2004 *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 over 5,000 members of the media around the country, and complete media kits and books were sent to nearly 2,500 reporters. Press 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. This data, along with the efforts of the state grantees to drive coverage by giving the story a local angle, contributes enormously to our yearly media success. More than half (31) of the state KIDS COUNT grantees provided their own press releases, which were either included in the state media kits or distributed directly by the grantee. Nearly 40 percent of the unique print stories contained a quote from a state KIDS COUNT grantee.

Also prior to the release, radio actualities featuring the state grantees were available and a video news feed (VNF) was produced and disseminated in all 50 states. Hager Sharp, the firm handling the KIDS COUNT release, also coordinated interviews with KIDS COUNT Coordinator Bill O'Hare for dozens of media outlets during the days leading up to the release. A password-protected copy of the report was available to the media on the KIDS COUNT Web site 14 days prior to the release date.

Building on 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). House members received it with a letter from Representatives Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Wally Herger (R-CA). Additionally, books and media kits were mailed 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.

Hager Sharp produced a youth summit to coincide with the 15th annual KIDS COUNT *Data Book* release in an effort to connect AECF to a wider audience. The event, titled, "Moving Youth from Risk to Opportunity", was held June 3, 2004 at the Marvin Center, George Washington University, in Washington, DC. Invited guests included many community and national organizations, influential business and industry leaders, federal, local and regional government personnel, and various youth from around the country. The panel featured eight speakers (see below) discussing themes and issues raised in the *Data Book's* essay and the important message about disconnected youth.

Moderated by Judy Woodruff, Anchor and Senior Correspondent for CNN, the summit drew a crowd of nearly 300 people. After opening remarks from both Mike Eskew and Doug Nelson, the participants engaged in a dialogue exchanging ideas on the solutions and flourishing programs that support a successful transition to adulthood. The panel consisted of the following participants:

SHAY BILCHIK: President and CEO of the Child Welfare League of America, and formerly named in *The Nonprofit Times* Power and Influence Top 50.

COUNTY JUDGE DOLORES BRIONES: Served El Paso, Texas since 1998, earning many honors, including being named a National Hispana Leadership Fellow and Annie E. Casey Fellow, and an appointment to the Texas Commission for Women by Governor Ann Richards.

GEOFFREY CANADA: Acclaimed author of *Fist Stick Knife Gun: A Personal History of Violence in America* and the recipient of the first Heinz Award in 1994 for his work as President/CEO of Harlem Children's Zone, Inc.

DIXIE HORN: Former foster care child, co-founder Foster Youth/Alumni of Idaho and current student at Boise State University studying social work and political science.

VEASNA RIN HOVER: Emigrated from Cambodia to the United States as an infant; currently seeking to complete his degree in computer engineering at Capital Community College (CT).

BRANDY HUDSON: Los Angeles Commission on Children and Families, alumni of the California State foster care system and current student at Santa Monica College studying political science.

VICTORIA ROWELL: Emmy-nominated actress, former foster child, and founder of Rowell Foster Children's Positive Plan in Los Angeles, CA.

GIBBY SERNA: Founding member of Youth Advocates in Action of San Antonio and Capital Area Alumni/Youth Network of Austin, and member of the National Foster Youth Advisory Council.

Print Coverage Analysis:

The analyses of the print coverage of 2001, 2002, and 2003 *KIDS COUNT Data Books* provided us with a clear picture of how media reports on the issues related to child well-being that are featured in the report. This paper analyzes the newspaper articles that were generated in response to the release of the 2004 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, including the essay "Moving Youth from Risk to Opportunity," and data mostly from 1996 and 2001.

All newspaper stories mentioning the 2004 *Data Book* after the release on June 3, 2004, were obtained through a major clipping service (Burrelle's). These stories were systematically categorized along several different dimensions and then analyzed to address several key coverage questions. Since radio and television transcripts are significantly harder to track, this analysis is limited to print coverage.

Release of the 2004 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* resulted in 1,160 known print stories, with the potential to reach more than 67 million readers. For the print analysis, each article was uniquely identified and several dimensions of each article were coded and entered into a database. Dimensions coded are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions of Each Newspaper Article that were Coded.

- Where the newspaper is published,
- Circulation of the newspaper,
- Whether the story ran on the front page,
- Type of story,
- Content of headlines,
- Whether rankings or trends were mentioned,
- Who was quoted,
- Overall tone of the story,
- Emphasis on positives or negatives in the indicators and trend lines,
- Which indicators were mentioned, and
- Whether key points from the news release were mentioned.

Overall, newspaper stories appeared in every state and the story had coverage in some of the largest publications in the country, as well as in some of the smallest. Table 2 shows the circulation of the 10 largest papers carrying a KIDS COUNT story. These 10 papers account for nearly 23 percent of the potential newsprint audience. Last year's top 10 papers accounted for 14 percent of newspaper audience.

Table 2. Ten Largest Papers with KIDS COUNT Stories by Circulation, 2004		
Newspaper	Circulations	Type of Story
Wall Street Journal (NY and regional editions)	3,641,200	National AP Story
USA Today	2,602,556	Local Original
New York Times	1,379,600 (x2)	Local Original and National AP Story
Washington Post	796,367 (x2)	Local Original (2 stories)
Houston Chronicle	739,389	Local Original
Arizona Republic	596,993 (x4)	Local Originals and Editorial (4 stories)
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	454,796	Local Original
Boston Globe	448,817	National AP Story
Star-Ledger, Newark	407,730 (x3)	Local Originals and Editorial (3 stories)
Cleveland Plain-Dealer	373,137	Local Original
Total in Top Ten:	15,407,531	

Stories were categorized 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, Siobhan McDonough from the Washington Bureau wrote a general *KIDS COUNT Data Book* story featuring information pulled from the KIDS COUNT national press release, including quotes from Casey Foundation President Doug Nelson. This story appeared in 290 newspapers across the country, including the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*.

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 “blurbs,” were grouped into the category of “Other Stories.”

Type of story	All Stories:		Unique Stories:	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
AP National	290	25%	1	<1%
State News Service Story	413	35.6%	49	12.5%
Local Story	239	18.4%	143	36.6%
Editorial	214	20.6%	195	49.9%
Other	4	<1%	4	1%
Total	1160		391	

As the above table indicates, there are two ways to count stories. One looks at all stories, and the other looks at only 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 1160 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 391 unique stories in order to determine how reporters interpret what is newsworthy about the KIDS COUNT release.

In 2004, State News Service stories accounted for nearly 36 percent of all stories, while the national AP story accounted for 25 percent of all stories (combined they account for more than 60 percent of the print coverage). Looking only at unique stories, however, those highly reproduced stories account for just 13 percent of the print coverage. Locally generated stories and editorials together accounted for 39 percent of all stories, but more than 86 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 2004, the top 11 states (total number of all stories) were: Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, Florida, Kansas, Mississippi, Michigan, Oklahoma, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Iowa. Tennessee newspapers carried the highest number of unique stories (26). The states with the fewest number of KIDS COUNT stories appearing in their newspapers were primarily smaller and/or less populous states including: Alaska, Wyoming, the Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Delaware.

Table 4. Number of Total Print Stories and Unique Print Stories by State, 2004		
State	All Stories, 2004	Unique Stories, 2004
Alabama	25	16
Alaska	1	1
Arizona	20	16
Arkansas	19	5
California	30	4
Colorado	7	6
Connecticut	10	4
Delaware	6	6
Florida	46	10
Georgia	7	2
Hawaii	3	4
Idaho	10	7
Illinois	47	7
Indiana	52	15
Iowa	34	13
Kansas	46	16
Kentucky	23	11
Louisiana	25	8
Maine	14	5
Maryland	9	4
Massachusetts	17	9
Michigan	44	14
Minnesota	13	3
Mississippi	45	16
Missouri	30	10
Montana	8	3
Nebraska	16	6
Nevada	6	2
New Hampshire	10	4
New Jersey	14	4
New Mexico	16	12
New York	13	1
North Carolina	41	16
North Dakota	9	4
Ohio	6	6
Oklahoma	44	13
Oregon	10	2
Pennsylvania	22	6
Rhode Island	4	3
South Carolina	34	22
South Dakota	16	2
Tennessee	55	26
Texas	23	10
Utah	7	5
Vermont	15	6
Virginia	7	0
Washington	7	1
West Virginia	27	16
Wisconsin	31	6
Wyoming	1	0
District of Columbia	8	5
Virgin Islands	1	1
National Publications	1	1
Total	1160	391

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, 413 of all stories included a quote from a KIDS COUNT grantee, while 320 stories quoted Casey Foundation President Doug Nelson (primarily reruns of the national AP story which pulled quotes from the national press release). KIDS COUNT Coordinator Bill O’Hare was quoted in 45 stories. Other people quoted (featured in 309 total articles) include KIDS COUNT spokespeople Laura Beavers, directors of state or community health agencies, state government officials, and local youth. Almost all of the articles (1110) mentioned KIDS COUNT and most (976) mentioned the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Very few articles (only 166) mentioned the Web site. Furthermore, only 15 articles mentioned Casey initiatives, the majority of which (13) were of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative. Casey Family Services was mentioned in one article, as was Casey’s Juvenile Justice Program.

“Moving Youth from Risk to Opportunity”:

The Foundation’s focus on disconnected youth was consistently picked up in the coverage of the 2004 *Data Book*. Of the 391 unique articles, 149 of them (38 percent) discussed difficulties faced by disconnected young adults. Of the 1160 total articles, 631 articles discussed disconnected young adults—that’s 54 percent of all stories. In contrast, only 322 total stories (27 unique stories) included the press release’s other lead, that child well-being improved nationally on 8 out of 10 indicators.

The essay focused on four risk factors that could steer vulnerable youth on the path toward becoming disconnected young adults: experience in the foster care system, experience in the juvenile justice system, being a teen parent, and dropping out of high school. Of these risk factors, the first two were mentioned most often, and the latter two were mentioned less often (see Table 5).

	All	Unique
Foster Care	10%	14%
Juvenile Justice	9%	12%
Teen Parent	5%	9%
High School Dropout	6%	10%

The report included data on how many 18 to 24-year-olds are considered disconnected. This data appeared in many of the articles. 340 articles mentioned that nearly 1 in 6 young adults are disconnected (only seven stories used the frame “more than 1 in 7”). Some stories (237) reported an increase in the share of disconnected young adults and many stories (545) mentioned the percentage of 18 to 24-year-olds who are disconnected. Of the stories that mentioned the percentage, the majority (69 percent) included the national share, with 14 percent including the state’s share of disconnected young adults. Sixteen percent of these stories included both the national and state share. Of the 484 stories that mentioned the number of disconnected young adults, 340 used the figure “3.8 million,” 107 used the state’s data, 26 mentioned both the state and national number, and only five stories used the figure “4 million.”

Only 81 stories mentioned any solutions for helping disconnected young adults or vulnerable youth. A slightly higher share, 199 stories, related these problems to the failing economy and recession.

Rankings:

Ranking states is the hallmark of KIDS COUNT. Although not all coverage focuses on state rankings, nearly 62 percent of the 2004 unique stories mention a state’s composite rank. A slightly lower number of stories mention change in rank (106 of the unique stories detail progress or set-backs in states’ ranks). Stories were more likely to mention a state’s trend rather than its rank in the headline. Of those stories that mentioned a trend in the headline, the majority focused on a positive trend (improvement). “KIDS COUNT” appeared in the headline of 129 total stories, but the “Casey Foundation” appeared in only one.

Table 6. Mention of State’s Rank and State’s Trend in KIDS COUNT 2004 news stories.		
	Mentioned in headline	
	All	Unique
Rank	19%	15%
Trend	30%	21%

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.

This year, right-hand page indicators were rarely mentioned in headlines, while stories almost always included them. Many stories covered several of the indicators.

The right-hand page indicators with the most coverage this year are high school dropout, infant mortality and child poverty, 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 articles: All Stories 2004		
Indicator	Mentioned in body of story	Percent
Total Stories	1160	100%
Low-Birthweight Babies	665	57%
Infant Mortality Rate	854	74%
Child Death Rate	656	57%
Teen Death Rate	676	58%
Teen Birth Rate	746	64%
High School Dropouts	809	70%
Idle Teens	304	26%
No Secure Parental Employment	591	51%
Child Poverty	875	75%
Single-Parent Families	559	48%

Table 7b. Numbers of times key indicators were mentioned in body of articles:
Unique Stories 2004

Indicator	Mentioned in body of story	Percent
Total Stories	391	100%
Low-Birthweight Babies	176	45%
Infant Mortality Rate	220	56%
Child Death Rate	193	49%
Teen Death Rate	183	49%
Teen Birth Rate	222	57%
High School Dropouts	192	49%
Idle Teens	129	33%
No Secure Parental Employment	146	37%
Child Poverty	232	59%
Single-Parent Families	155	40%

Conclusion:

The 2004 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* media strategy yielded higher numbers of print, television, and Web placements than the successful 2003 and 2002 strategies. These placements also include far more mentions of the theme of the *Data Book* than last year. Unlike last year, this year's national AP story included a focus on disconnected young adults driving much of the coverage nationwide.

Our analysis of the 2004 media strategy reinforces the importance of a state-by-state approach, regional experts and data, a child-specific theme, and presentation of national and state trends. In 2005, we should explore ways to highlight a theme that builds on these strengths.

APPENDIX A – Comparative figures for 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>
Total number of articles	1160	917	753	1,108
Number of unique articles	391	276	244	287
Total readership	67 million	46 million	41 million	49 million
Rate of “theme” focus: total stories	54% mention “disconnected young adults”	14% mention “high cost of being poor”	N/A	N/A
Rate of “theme” focus: unique stories	38% mention “disconnected young adults”	14% mention “high cost of being poor”	46% mention “low income working families”	N/A

- In 2001, 2002 and 2003, the release of the KIDS COUNT Data Book generated a large number of newspaper articles, and information from the report reached over 40 million potential readers each year. In 2004, the release of the KIDS COUNT Data Book exceeded expectations and generated over 67 million potential readers.
- The number of all articles, the number of unique articles, and total readership were larger in 2004 than in 2003, 2002 and 2001.

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>
<i>Number of Airings</i>	509	625	462
<i>Stations</i>	245	294	221
Markets	105	131	113
Viewers	16,298,976	21,585,588	17,679,297

- The 2004 video news feed generated 509 stories on national and local television news across the country. This impressive number is higher than the 2002 release but lower than the 2003 release.
- The high usage of the KIDS COUNT VNF can be attributed to its use of state-specific data and sound-bites.

Table A3 – Radio Coverage: 2002, 2003, and 2004			
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>
Number of radio stations	More than 900	More than 150	More than 600
Number of listeners	10 million	N/A	4 million

- Tracking radio is far more difficult than tracking print or television coverage. For this reason, the figures in the above table are estimates and highly unreliable.
- Many radio networks covered the 2004 release. Radio networks include: AP Radio, CNN Radio, Focus on the Family, and NPR’s Morning Edition.
- The 50-state audio bite-line produced and promoted for the 2004 release was a huge success, generating an estimated 800 radio stories featuring sound-bites from state grantees and/or Bill O’Hare.

Table A 4 – Web site activity: 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004				
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>
Visitors on day of the release	8,000	10,000	7,500	7,600
Visitors during the week of release	25,000	30,000	22,000	22,000
Visitors during the month of release	81,736	74,605	N/A	N/A
Total visitors during the year	775,000*	770,000	740,000	400,000

* estimated based on traffic through August 2004

There is clear evidence that release of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* drew people to our site. There were about 8,000 visitors during the day of the release of the 2004 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and 25,000 during the week of the release.

We found that those accessing the KIDS COUNT web site this year spent more time and went into more depth. The month of June 2004 yielded 310,596 page views, compared to 298,024 in 2003. Furthermore, the PDF of the entire *Data Book* was downloaded more than 26,000 times in June 2004 (versus nearly 17,000 downloads in June 2003).

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. 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. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and communities fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs.

KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. At the national level, the principal activity of the initiative is the publication of the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, which uses the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children. The Foundation also funds a nationwide network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that provide a more detailed community-by-community picture of the condition of children.

Additional copies of this report are available from:

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