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**News from the 2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book
Illinois' Kids – Opportunities and Well-Being Status**

Our ability to progress as a state depends on the degree to which we can create opportunities for all children to succeed. Illinois ranks 24th nationally in the *2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children. The *Data Book* reveals that Illinois improved on 5 of the 10 measures affecting child well-being since 2000. Yet on two other measures, conditions worsened for Illinois' kids. Conditions remained unchanged on one measure, and two others were not comparable to previous years.

The 21st annual *Data Book* is complemented by the expanded KIDS COUNT Data Center, which contains hundreds of measures of child well-being and allows users to create maps and graphs of the data at the national, state, county, and city level. To access information for Illinois, go to <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/il>.

Infant mortality continues steady decline

The infant mortality rate in Illinois was 6.7 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007, down from 7.2 per 1,000 births in 2006 and 8.5 per 1,000 in 2000. The decline in infant mortality since 2000 has been steeper in Illinois than in any other state.

Increase in percentage of low birthweight babies

The proportion of low birthweight babies in Illinois rose from 7.9 percent in 2000 to 8.5 percent in 2007 – an increase similar to nationwide trends. This increase is a cause for concern because low birth weight babies are at higher risk for various health problems, even in adulthood.

Little change in teen birth rate

Between 2000 and 2005, the birth rate among females ages 15-19 declined substantially in both Illinois and the U.S. as a whole. From 2005 to 2007, the nationwide rate increased from 40 to 43 births per 1,000 females, suggesting a possible reversal of the longer-term trend. Over the same period of time, the teen birth rate in Illinois showed a slight increase from 39 to 40 births per 1,000. In 2008, the state's teen birth rate dropped back to 39 per 1,000. (Nationwide data for 2008 are not yet available.)

Child poverty rate is higher than in 2000

The child poverty rate in Illinois gradually increased from 15 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2008. (A family of two adults and two children were considered poor if their income in 2008 fell below \$21,834.) About 535,000 children in Illinois were poor in 2008. The data for 2008 do not reflect the full effects of the recession.