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Twenty-fifth Edition of *KIDS COUNT*[®] Data Book Shows Florida Making Positive Changes in Education with Mixed Results in Health, Economic, and Family & Community Domains

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is marking 25 years of bringing attention to national and state-level data on the well-being of children. For 23 years, Florida has been a part of this national data partnership working to advance investments in effective programs and services to help ensure that Florida's children find the best possible outcomes.

"With advances in neuroscience, as well as solid research on what works, we now know more than ever before about how to give children a good start and help them meet major developmental milestones throughout childhood," said Patrick McCarthy, the Foundation's president and CEO. "On several fronts, we've seen the difference that smart policies, effective programs and high quality practice can make in improving child well-being and long term outcomes. We should all be encouraged by the improvements in many well-being indicators in the health, education and safety areas."

The data trends over time show that Florida's focus on education has been a good investment. Positive advances are seen in all four indicators in the education domain, as well as a marked gain in children living in households with the head of household having a high school diploma.

Florida sees more positive movement in the health domain including considerable improvement in the child and teen death rate; down by more than half since 1990. Children having health care coverage improved slightly, but with nearly a half million children without coverage, we need to do more.

Given the depth and severity of the economic crisis over the last number of years, our state still has rebuilding to accomplish. One in every four children in our state lives in poverty, defined as income below \$23,283 for a family of two adults and two children (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Nearly half of Florida children live in families that endure a high housing cost burden, which means they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. These two factors shine a light on a tough reality. For Florida to thrive, we must continue to create pathways to economic opportunity for families to prosper.

Great progress for Florida is the significant decline in the teen birth rate; down from 69 births per 1,000 in 1990 to 28 in 2012. This is an important success because it can affect more than one generation carrying the obstacles through to the child. A pregnant teen and her child each face impediments to education, employment, and economic success.

"Through improved data and monitoring of policy, we have revealed opportunities to help families succeed. It is time to focus on these tools, utilize the measurable outcomes, and provide a consensus to move our communities forward," said Susan Weitzel, Director, Florida KIDS COUNT.

The [KIDS COUNT Data Book](#) with state-by-state rankings and supplemental data launches at 12:01 a.m. EDT, July 22, 2014. For complete details on Florida, visit www.floridakidscount.org.

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Florida KIDS COUNT (FKC) is part of a Nationwide KIDS COUNT Network and project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. FKC disseminates national, statewide and county-level data on key indicators for Florida's children.

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