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**PERSISTENT BARRIERS TO SUCCESS:
NEW *KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK* LOOKS AT LONG-TERM TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING**

JULY 22, 2014 – New national rankings of child well-being show that our fragile economic recovery is not doing well by Washington’s kids.

Washington ranks 18th out of all 50 states in the new *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a detailed look at 16 indicators of child well-being grouped into four categories: Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, and Family and Community.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 2014 annual [Data Book](#) marks 25 years of bringing attention to national and state-level data on kids. It compares current data with 1990 data to show trends over the course of a quarter-century; and it compares data from 2012 and 2013 with data from 2005, to note how kids are faring currently, compared with prior to the economic crisis.

What’s not working for Washington’s kids?

Here in Washington, the percentage of children growing up in poverty has risen by 27 percent, from 15 percent in 2005 to 19 percent in 2012. In 2012, 23 percent of all Washington children lived below the official poverty line.

Other indicators of economic well-being have also worsened: In 2012, 31 percent of all Washington children lived with parents who lacked secure employment (up 19 percent since 2008), and nearly 4 in 10 lived in households burdened by high housing costs (up 3 percent since 2005).

“Families with children born into poverty are struggling to find the entry point in the path of opportunity,” says Paola Maranan, executive director of the Children’s Alliance. “America’s legacy of racist laws and practices means that a child’s race or ethnicity remains a predictor of where that path leads.”

For example, in Washington state:

- Nearly half (48 percent) of Latino children live in households burdened by high housing costs—a rate that is 19 percent higher than that for all other children.
- Four in 10 African American children live with parents who lack secure employment—a rate that’s 25 percent higher than that for all other children.
- The child poverty rates for African American, Latino and Native American children, at 34-35 percent, are nearly three times higher than for non-Hispanic white children (13 percent).
- The number of Asian Pacific Islander children living in poverty nearly doubled from 2005 to 2012, from 9,000 to 17,000.

What is working for Washington’s kids?

Children are faring better in the areas of health and education.

The number of children going without health coverage, for example, declined between 2005 and 2012. State-level data shows a surge of enrollments in Apple Health for Kids since October 2013—when the Affordable Care Act ushered in a new health care marketplace—suggesting that the number of uninsured children continues to decline.

Student achievement in math and reading, on-time graduation and participation in preschool have all improved since the middle of the last decade, yet the disparities between children of different racial and ethnic backgrounds have remained more or less unchanged.

“All kids deserve a great start in life—where they can grow and learn without poverty as a barrier to success,” said Remy Trupin, executive director of the Washington State Budget & Policy Center. “The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is a wake-up call to policymakers at the state and national level. It is absolutely crucial to the future of our state and our economy that we make smart investments in our future.”

Lawmakers have taken steps to improve the lives of kids and families. Since October 2013, when the state’s health care marketplace opened, 94,000 children have been newly enrolled in health coverage—which is instrumental in fulfilling our constitutional commitment to a basic education for children. A new study by the National Bureau of Economic Research indicates that affordable coverage like [Apple Health for Kids boosts educational attainment](#): increasing eligibility by 10 percent boosted high-school graduation rates by 5 percent, and college completion by a little more than 3 percent.

One part of the Act’s success here derives from in-person assistors, embedded in community-based organizations across the state, who help Washington families find a health plan that suits their needs.

In South King County, the health resource organization Global to Local deployed in-person assisters at 42 community events held in conjunction with SeaTac’s Healthpoint Clinic from October 2013 through March. Bilingual in nine languages, Global to Local’s team of assisters helped immigrant families connect to the HealthPlanFinder web site and get coverage. Three out of four individuals applying for coverage also had children who got coverage.

Global to Local succeeded in covering 2,331 people during this time period—three times as many people as they’d initially projected.

“Access to health care and health literacy is so important to folks,” said Annya Pintak, who manages the in-person assister team. “If we want to make sure kids have a healthy start in life, we need to answer the questions that arise about coverage.”

Pintak urges state lawmakers to continue their financial support of in-person assisters. As children of color are at greater risk of going without health coverage, she says there’s a lot more work to do.

“The well-being of Washington’s children is the most important indicator of our long-term economic success,” says Trupin. “Tracking how well children are doing should be just as important as our nation’s tracking our economic health indicators.”

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KIDS COUNT in Washington (www.kidscountwa.org) is a joint effort of the Children's Alliance (www.childrensalliance.org) and the Washington State Budget & Policy Center (www.budgetandpolicy.org), which are working together to pursue measurable improvements in kids’ lives in Washington state.