

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE** until Tuesday, July 21, 2015, 12:01 a.m. EDT

**Contacts:** Camille Hayes, 510.763.2444 x121, [CHayes@childrennow.org](mailto:CHayes@childrennow.org)  
Jessica Dalesandro Mindnich, 510.763.2444 x115, [JMindnich@ChildrenNow.org](mailto:JMindnich@ChildrenNow.org)

### **California Makes Strides in Kids' Health**

*New Report Shows State's Overall Ranking in Child Well-being Still Low at 38<sup>th</sup> Out of 50*

Oakland, CA—Today the Annie E. Casey Foundation released a report that shows California has seen significant improvement in the areas of children's access to health coverage and its child and teen mortality. This moves California from 26<sup>th</sup> in the nation in kids' health in 2014, to the number 14 spot in this year's *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book*.

This progress is linked to the impact of state policy achievements in the last two years. The Affordable Care Act's Medi-Cal expansion, the reinstatement of the Black Infant Health Program and express enrollment in Medi-Cal via the CalFresh nutritional program all have contributed to the state's improved health ranking.

Despite being one of the wealthiest states in the nation, California ranks 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50 in children's economic well-being. In overall child well-being, California is also near the bottom of the list, ranking 38<sup>th</sup> nationally.

Children Now President Ted Lempert said the low score in economic well-being is troubling.

"California has the world's eighth largest economy," he says. "We're in a better position than most states to invest in kids, but support hasn't kept up with pressures families have felt since the recession. We have more children living in poverty, and more parents lacking secure employment than we did in 2008. More must be done so *all* families can share in the economic recovery."

Lempert said he's pleased with the progress in kids' health and access to medical coverage, but there's still much work to be done.

"We're taking important steps in the right direction, but there's no question that we need significantly more investments in quality programs for kids. For a state like California, which leads the nation in so many ways, coming in 38<sup>th</sup> in child well-being is not an acceptable score. We can and should aim to be number one in supporting kids and families."

The new *KIDS COUNT* report reveals that the economic recovery has sidestepped communities of color, leaving African American and Latino children particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of poverty, including diminished school performance and poor health outcomes.

With half of California kids currently on Medi-Cal, these latest results demonstrate that state investment in quality programs can positively impact children's lives. Sustained support and future expansion of such programs will be necessary for California to improve its ranking not just in children's health, but in all the critical areas that determine if kids will thrive.

**Related Links:** The full Annie E. Casey Foundation report, *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, will be available July 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at <http://www.aecf.org/>. *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

**About Children Now:** Children Now is the leading nonpartisan, umbrella research, policy development, and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting children's health, education, and child well-being in California and creating national media policies that support child development. Children Now also leads The Children's Movement of California, a grassroots network of more than 1,150 business, education, parent, civil rights, and faith-, community-, and ethnic-based organizations, as well as thousands of individuals, working together to make children a priority in public policymaking. Learn more about us at [www.childrennow.org](http://www.childrennow.org).

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