

July 21, 2015 || PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact: HyeSook Chung || 202-234-9404 || hchung@dckids.org

**35,000 DC Children Live in Poor Neighborhoods;
No Reduction in Child Poverty since the Great Recession**

Washington, DC — About 27 percent of children in the District of Columbia live in poverty. This percentage amounts to approximately 2,000 more children living in poverty today than during the Great Recession, according to the newly released 2015 *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* from [the Annie. E. Casey Foundation](#). Economic hardship remains pervasive as two out of every five children are living in families where parents lack secure employment. Even when parents are working full time, wages and benefits are often insufficient to adequately support a family.

The 2015 *Data Book*, which focuses on key trends in child well-being in the post-recession years, measures child well-being in four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Today, the [Casey Foundation](#) reveals that the rising tide of recovery in the form of increasing employment and concentrated wealth has left stagnant pockets of low-income, struggling communities and families, where a child's future is anchored in scarcity and hardship.

KIDS COUNT data for the District of Columbia shows that children and youth have experienced setbacks in their economic well-being while seeing improvements in other areas, such as education and health. Declines in the economic well-being domain illustrate that the recovery did not lift all families with children in the District:

- 30,000 or 27 percent of DC children were living in poverty in 2013, about a three percent increase from 2012. This represents an increase from 2008 when 26 percent of children lived in poverty.
- One-third of DC children live in high-poverty areas. High-poverty areas are census tracts where 30 percent or more of the population lives in poverty. This can negatively impact children in low-income families as well as more affluent children.
- 45,000 DC children live in households with a high housing cost burden. These children are in families that spend 30 percent or more of their pre-tax income on housing, leaving parents/caretakers with fewer resources to spend on basic needs.
- 11 percent of teens are not in school and not working. This represents the number of youth ages 16 to 19 who are not engaged and may face significant economic hardship as they transition to adulthood.

“The KIDS COUNT report highlights what all of us who work as advocates for children and youth in the District know too well: that too many of our children are growing up in conditions that do not support their success in school and in life,” said HyeSook Chung, executive director of DC Action for Children. “All of us need to work smarter to ensure all of our children, youth and their families have what they need to thrive, regardless of their zip code.”

Despite declines in economic well-being, there are several bright spots to celebrate:

- The number of children not attending preschool is the lowest in the nation at 25 percent.
- Reading and math proficiency increased by 9 percent since 2007.
- Graduation rates have improved. The percent of high school students not graduating on time decreased from 44 percent in 2008 to 29 percent in 2012.
- The child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children under 18) decreased by 69 percent between 2008 and 2013.

The District of Columbia has been considered recession-proof, but the national economic downturn did have ramifications that District children and families continue to experience today. The improvements in health and education coupled with declines in economic well-being illustrate how policies and programs during the economic recovery impacted children and families; investments in health and education can create lasting positive differences for children.

The Casey Foundation offers a number of recommendations to ensure access to opportunity for all children. The Foundation promotes a two-generation strategy that simultaneously addresses the needs of children directly while providing tools and resources to their parents. Three critical strategies include:

- Provide parents with multiple pathways to get family-supporting jobs and achieve financial stability.
- Ensure access to high-quality early childhood education and enriching elementary school experiences.
- Equip parents to better support their children socially and emotionally and to advocate for their kids' education.

The 2015 Data Book will be available July 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at <http://databook.kidscount.org>, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. The [Data Center](#) allows users to create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and to view real-time information on mobile devices. Because of the disparities among DC neighborhoods, city-wide data do not provide a complete picture of child and youth well-being. More localized and nuanced DC KIDS COUNT data, analyzed at the neighborhood level, is available through our [DC KIDS COUNT Data Tool 2.0](#).

###

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Founded in 1992, DC Action for Children (www.dckids.org) is a nonprofit organization focused on improving conditions and outcomes for the District's children, youth and families through public awareness, policy, research and technical assistance. DC Action is the KIDS COUNT grantee for the District, tracking key indicators of child and youth well-being and neighborhood well-being for children and youth. Follow us on Twitter at [@ActforDChildren](https://twitter.com/ActforDChildren) and like us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/daction>.