

UNDER EMBARGO until Tuesday, June 13, 2017, 12:01 a.m. EDT

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**Proposed Federal Cuts Jeopardize D.C.'s Monumental Gains in
Children's Health Care Coverage**

*Just 2 percent of D.C. children lack health insurance; Leaders must protect against
rolling back access to health coverage*

District of Columbia, June 13, 2017 — Backed by strong federal policies and an unyielding local commitment to improving children's health, 98 percent of children in the District of Columbia have health insurance, according to the *2017 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The percentage of children in the nation's capital with health coverage is one of the highest in the country, however, proposed federal cuts may jeopardize these important gains.

"We have seen first-hand that success is possible when local and federal policymakers prioritize child well-being," said Shana Bartley, acting executive director of DC Action for Children.

"Sustained local investments coupled with key provisions of the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid expansion, and the reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program directly resulted in D.C.'s leading child health insurance rate.

"But much of these gains could be lost," Bartley added. "The Administration and Congress are eager to make dramatic cuts to the social safety net. We urge the mayor and D.C. Council to strategize proactively and articulate clear plans to protect our children's health and well-being."

Protecting and defending programs that ensure child well-being is especially important in the District of Columbia, because many families already face economic insecurity. One quarter of D.C. children live below the poverty line and the number of D.C. children living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round work rose to a five-year high of 50,000 (43 percent).

The *2017 Data Book* focuses on key trends in child well-being measured in four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Today, the Annie E. Casey Foundation urges policymakers to protect and invest in what works for children.

KIDS COUNT data highlight noteworthy gains for child well-being in D.C.:

- The number of D.C. teens not attending school nor working dropped from 10 percent to 5 percent, between 2014 and 2015.
- 98 percent of D.C. children have health insurance, a rate that the District has maintained since 2012.
- The teen birth rate in D.C. decreased by 42 percent between 2010 and 2015.

KIDS COUNT data also illustrate a reality of unequal prosperity for D.C. children and families:

- The number of D.C. children living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round work rose to a five-year high of 50,000.

- At 32 percent, D.C. had the highest rate of high school students not graduating on time in the nation.
- 73 percent of D.C. fourth graders scored below proficient reading level, and 81 percent of eighth graders in D.C. lacked proficiency in math, far below the national average for these indicators.

“We cannot abandon targeted public investments that promote child well-being and bring economic opportunity to D.C. families,” Bartley said. “It is crucial that the city bolsters efforts to ensure that every child has access to the resources they need to succeed.”

Bartley agreed with the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s recommendations in the *Data Book* for how policymakers can ensure that all children can reach their full potential:

- **HEALTH – Maintain health care programs.** Provide continued investments at the federal and state levels. Remove systematic barriers that prevent families from enrolling their children in health coverage programs.
- **EDUCATION – Invest in early childhood education programs.** Science has taught us that the first few years of development can position a child for success in school and life. Supporting early childhood education opportunities at the local, state and federal levels enables children to reach critical milestones that can lead to a lifetime of success.
- **ECONOMIC – Expand programs that create economic stability for families.** The EITC, at the federal level and in many states, has become a cornerstone in helping low-income families meet basic needs. Offering tax breaks for child care can help working parents better balance their financial responsibilities.

Release Information

The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available June 13 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org/databook, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the *Data Book* can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

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About DC Action for Children

Founded in 1992, DC Action for Children is a nonpartisan 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 and like us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/dcaction>

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

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.