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2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book Fact Sheet

BALTIMORE — The 2019 KIDS COUNT® *Data Book* marks the 30th anniversary of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual examination of child well-being in the United States.

The three decades since the *Data Book* was first published has seen the U.S. child population increase from 64 million to nearly 74 million, as described in this year's special examination of demographic and geographic shifts since 1990. The greatest increases in child population were concentrated in the southern and western United States; the percentage of children in the country who were Latino more than doubled between 1990 and 2017, and the percentage who were Asian and Pacific Islander doubled.

The 2019 edition also updates the KIDS COUNT index and state rankings to reflect the latest data and trends, in most cases from 2010 to 2017. There were encouraging gains in 11 of the 16 data measures. However, for the first time since 2010, the number of children without health insurance increased. Despite gains for children of all races and income levels during the reporting period, the nation's racial inequities remain deep, systemic and stubbornly persistent.

The 16 KIDS COUNT Index Indicators From 2010–17

Four domains comprise the KIDS COUNT index*, which is a concise means of tracking child well-being to easily pinpoint concerns and initiate policy solutions. These domains are (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. Each domain includes four indicators, for a total of 16. These indicators represent the best available data to measure the status of child well-being nationally and in states.

Economic Well-Being

- Percentage of children in poverty (income of \$24,858 for a family of two adults and two children in 2017)
- Percentage of children whose parents lack secure employment (no full-time, year-round work)
- Percentage of children living in a household with a high housing cost burden (spend more than 30 percent of pretax income on housing)
- Percentage of teens not in school and not working (ages 16–19)

Education

- Percentage of young children not in school (ages 3–4)
- Percentage of fourth-graders not proficient in reading
- Percentage of eighth-graders not proficient in math
- Percentage of high school students not graduating on time

Health*

- Percentage of low birth-weight babies
- Percentage of children without health insurance
- Rate of child and teen deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–19*
- Percentage of teens who abuse alcohol or drugs (ages 12–17)*

Family and Community

- Percentage of children living in single-parent families
- Percentage of children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma
- Percentage of children living in high-poverty areas
- Rate of teen births per 1,000 females ages 15–19

National Trends Since 2010

Data over a recent period of seven or so years reveal encouraging trends in child well-being nationally, with improvements in 11 out of the 16 indicators. More parents were financially stable and lived without burdensome housing costs and more teens graduated from high school and delayed childbearing. Broadly speaking, the nation helped children experience gains in the Economic Well-Being domain, with promising but mixed results in the Health, Education and Family and Community domains.

All four Economic Well-Being indicators improved. Fewer children were living in poverty, more parents were employed and fewer families were spending a disproportionate amount of their income on housing costs. The most improvement was in the percentage of children living in a household with a high housing cost burden, where the rate dropped from 41 percent in 2010 to 31 percent in 2017. Nonetheless, in 2017, nearly one in five children lived in poverty.

In 2017, the national unemployment rate was 4.4 percent; it has since declined to 3.6 percent. Given this change in unemployment — one of the key factors to improving the financial stability of families — the Foundation expects to see ongoing progress in this area.

Meanwhile, two of the four Education indicators — fourth-grade reading proficiency and high school graduation — showed improvement. Notably, with 85 percent of high school students graduating on time in the 2016–17 school year, the nation’s graduation rate reached an all-time high.

The Health domain saw mixed results. Far fewer children lacked access to health insurance coverage in 2017 than in 2010. The Foundation attributes this drop to expanded public health coverage. Even with these advancements, between 2016 and 2017, the *number* of children without insurance increased for the first time in the past decade (even as the percentage — 5 percent — held steady for the past three years). Data also show that the percentage of babies born with low birth weight had increased for the third year in a row. These recent trends are something to watch.

Trends in the Family and Community domain, for the most part, were encouraging. The teen birth rate continued its decline, reaching a new low, and a smaller percentage of children were living with parents who lacked a high school diploma. The percentage of children living in single-parent families remained unchanged between 2010 and 2017. In 2017, more than one-third of children lived in single-parent families, which tend to have fewer resources in terms of time and money and the opportunities those often provide.

Especially troubling was the number of kids growing up in high-poverty neighborhoods, which can signal a lack of community resources and economic opportunities for the children who live there. Although the percentage of children in high-poverty neighborhoods declined for the second year in a row, 12 percent of the nation’s children continued to live in communities where poverty rates were at or above 30 percent in 2017.

Overall, the positive strides in some areas of child well-being, driven by effective policies, provide encouragement that the nation can advance the substantial work needed to improve the prospects of its youngest generation.

Racial Inequities in Child Well-Being

States are failing to dismantle barriers that African-American, American Indian and Latino children especially encounter. As a result, nearly all index measures show that children with the same potential experience disparate outcomes. A few notable exceptions: African-American kids were more likely than the national average to be in school as young children and to live in families in which the head of the household has at least a high school diploma. American Indian families with children were less likely to be

burdened with high housing costs. Latino kids were more likely to be born at a healthy birth weight, and Latino children and teens had a lower death rate than the national average.

As a result of generations-long inequities and systemic barriers that persist, children of color face high hurdles to success on many indicators. African-American children were significantly more likely to live in single-parent families and high-poverty neighborhoods. American Indian kids were almost three times as likely to lack health insurance and more than twice as likely to live in neighborhoods with more limited resources than the average child. And Latino children were the most likely to live with a head of household who lacked a high school diploma and to not be in school when they were young.

Although Asian and Pacific Islander children tend to fare better than their peers, disaggregated data show that stark differences exist within this population. For example, 41 percent of Burmese and 32 percent of Hmong children lived in poverty compared with 11 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children overall. And 63 percent of Burmese children lived in a family where the head of household lacked a high school diploma — almost five times higher than the national average.

State Rankings

Composite scores from each of the four domains are translated into a single ranking which is used to rank states on how children are faring. All indicators are equally weighted in the domain and overall rankings.

Top Five States Overall: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey

Bottom Five States Overall: Arizona[‡], Nevada, Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico

Economic Well-Being: Top five states: North Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Utah[†], Nebraska

Bottom five states: California[‡], Mississippi, West Virginia, New Mexico, Louisiana

Education: Top five states: Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont

Bottom five states: Arizona[‡], Nevada, Louisiana, Alaska, New Mexico

Health: Top five states: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island[†], New York

Bottom five states: Nevada[‡], Mississippi, New Mexico, Wyoming, Alaska

Family and Community: Top five states: Utah, New Hampshire, Vermont, North Dakota, Maine[†]

Bottom five states: Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico

[†]not in top five in the domain last year

[‡]not in bottom five in the domain last year

Note on data sources: The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses the most up-to-date estimates from federal statistical agencies including the U.S. Census Bureau, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Center for Education Statistics and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. For more information, see the Definitions and Data Sources section at www.aecf.org/databook

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The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* with state-by-state rankings and supplemental data is embargoed until 12:01 a.m. EDT, June 17, 2019, and can be viewed at www.aecf.org at that time. Users can download the complete *Data Book* and access hundreds of other measures of child well- by visiting the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

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.