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Contact:

Linda Tilly  
334-213-2410 x 106 or 334-546-1995  
[ltilly@alavoices.org](mailto:ltilly@alavoices.org)

Adrienne Stevens  
334-213-2410 x 101  
[astevens@alavoices.org](mailto:astevens@alavoices.org)

## 2009 KIDS COUNT Data Book Reveals Latest Snapshot of Child Well-being

Montgomery, AL - Child well-being in Alabama improves yet continues to rank 48<sup>th</sup> in overall child well-being according to the *2009 KIDS COUNT Data Book* released nationally by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The *Data Book* shows that since 2000 Alabama improved in four of the ten measures which affect the ranking. The state saw improvement in the infant mortality rate, teen birth rate, high school dropout rate and the percent of teens not attending school and not working.

“While Alabama ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the *2009 KIDS COUNT Data Book*,” said Linda Tilly, executive director of VOICES for Alabama’s Children, “a recent study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Duke University showed that Alabama’s rate of improvement in child well-being over the past 15 years puts us in the top 20 states in the country. If we can continue this rate of improvement we should eventually be able to leap over some other states in the relative rankings.”

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual *Data Book* puts Alabama trends on par with most national trends. Nationally, child well-being worsened on four primarily economic factors, including child poverty. Likewise, children and families in Alabama were not spared from the devastating and ever worsening state of the economy. The percent of children living in families surviving on incomes below \$21,027, increased from 21 percent in 2000 to 24 percent in 2007.

Nationally, the teen birth rate has been on the rise in recent years. Since 2000, the state of Alabama has seen an improvement in the number of teens giving birth, ranking 39<sup>th</sup> on the teen birth rate measure in the *2009 KIDS COUNT Data Book*.

“The well-being of all of our state’s children impacts our future economic viability as a state,” said Tilly. “Recent initiatives of high level retired military leaders also have connected national security to how well we prepare our children. *KIDS COUNT* gives us a report card on how we are doing now and road map for where we’d like to go.”

Alabama’s data is included in a new online and mobile-friendly Data Center ([datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)) that contains hundreds of measures of child well-being covering national, state and county information. The information can help policymakers, service providers and community leaders analyze various aspects of child well-being as they plan policies and programs to improve the welfare of children.

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The *2009 KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Casey Foundation publication. VOICES for Alabama's Children which publishes the companion *Alabama Kids Count Data Book* assisted the Foundation with the release in Alabama.

VOICES for Alabama's Children is a statewide non-profit who works to ensure the well-being of Alabama's children through research, public awareness and advocacy.

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