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**News from the 2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book**  
**Montana's Kids – National Data Book Highlights Montana Child Well-Being through Data Indicators**

Our ability to progress as a state depends on the degree to which we can create opportunities for all children to succeed. Montana ranks 32nd nationally in the *2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count program. The *Data Book* reveals that Montana improved on two of the 10 measures affecting child well-being since 2000. Yet on five other measures, conditions worsened for Montana's kids. Conditions remained unchanged on one measure, and two others were not comparable to previous years.

The 21st annual *Data Book* is complemented by the expanded online KIDS COUNT Data Center, which contains hundreds of measures of child well-being and allows users to create maps and graphs of the data at the national, state, county, and city level. To access all ten indicators and other data regarding Montana's children and families go to <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/mt>.

“Our goal is to expand people's understanding of data and have them recognize that understanding data trends in child well-being- both good and bad, highlight challenges and opportunities for policy leaders, businesses, and communities,” said Montana Kids Count Communications Director Julie Ehlers. “These rankings provide necessary information to recognize areas of concern and hopefully promote positive change for Montana's children and families.”

Areas of note in the data include:

**Increasing share of teens not in school and not high school graduates.**

The share of teens ages 16-19 in Montana who were not enrolled in school and were not high school graduates increased from 7 percent in 2000 to 9 percent in 2008. Montana tied for 44th nationally—among the bottom 10 states—on this indicator.

**Child poverty worsens since 2000.**

In 2008, 21 percent of Montana's children lived in poverty, up from 17 percent in 2000. Montana's child poverty rate is higher than the U.S. rate of 18 percent. (A family of two adults and two children were considered poor if their income in 2008 fell below \$21,834.)

**Percentage of low-birthweight babies dips after steady rise.**

The share of low-birthweight babies in Montana rose from 6.2 percent in 2000 to 7.2 percent in 2007. The state's 2007 rate, however, is slightly lower than it was a year earlier—suggesting a possible reversal of the longer-term trend.

**Montana performs better than the national average on four of the 10 indicators.**

Montana fared better than the United States as a whole on four indicators: the percentage of low-birthweight babies, the infant mortality rate, the teen birth rate, and the percentage of children in single-parent families.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. The foundation's primary mission is to foster public policies, human-service reforms and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families.

The Montana KIDS COUNT program is funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation and is a statewide effort to identify the status and well-being of Montana children by collecting data about them and publishing an annual data book regarding Montana. More information and data is available at <http://www.montanakidscount.org>.