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## **NATIONAL *KIDS COUNT* REPORT RELEASED ON WELL-BEING OF AMERICA'S CHILDREN**

### **National Report Ranks Colorado 20<sup>th</sup> in Nation in Overall Child Well-Being**

*Denver, CO* - The national *2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children, was released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The report ranks Colorado 20<sup>th</sup> in the nation in overall child well-being, compared to 22<sup>nd</sup> in 2009.

Consistent with national trends, the national *KIDS COUNT Data Book* reveals that since 2000, Colorado improved on five of the 10 measures affecting child well-being: infant mortality rate, child death rate, teen death rate, teen birth rate, and teens not in school and not high school graduates. Yet on three other measures, conditions worsened for kids in Colorado and nationwide: low-birthweight babies, children in poverty, and children in single-parent families. Two additional child well-being measures were not comparable to previous years.

While the direction of Colorado's child well-being trends mirrored national trends in all 10 indicators, the change in the percent of children living in poverty was drastically higher in Colorado - increasing from 10 to 15 percent of children living in poverty between 2000 and 2008, compared to an increase from 17 to 18 percent of children living in poverty in the national trend.

"While Colorado has seen improvements in several child well-being measures, we are very concerned about the magnitude of the growth of the poverty rate because of the implications on children well into the future," said Chris Watney, President of the Colorado Children's Campaign. "Without bold interventions to mitigate the impacts of poverty on kids, we face the potential of reversal of some of these gains."

Additional Colorado data from the *Data Book* includes:

#### **Share of children in single-parent families among lowest in nation.**

In 2008, 27 percent of Colorado's children lived in single-parent families. This figure slightly exceeds the 26 percent level in 2000. Colorado tied Iowa for seventh nationally on this indicator.

#### **Child poverty is worse than in 2000; fastest increase in the nation.**

The percentage of children in Colorado living in poverty has increased from 10 percent in 2000 to 15 percent in 2008, tying Colorado with New Hampshire for the fastest increase in the

percent of children living in poverty in the nation. (A family of two adults and two children were considered poor if their income in 2008 fell below \$21,834.) Despite the alarming growth, Colorado ranks 18<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the percentage of children currently living in poverty.

### **Child mortality continues to fall.**

At 16 deaths per 100,000 children in 2007, the child death rate in Colorado is 27 percent lower than it was in 2000 and 16 percent lower than its 2006 level. Colorado tied California and Maine for 11th among the 50 states on this measure.

Data from the national *Data Book*, including the growth in Colorado's childhood poverty rate, is consistent with the data released by Colorado Children's Campaign in April in the *2010 KIDS COUNT in Colorado!* report, which is sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

"Colorado continues to rank in the middle of the nation in overall child well-being, yet many Colorado kids are still far from average," said Chris Watney, President of the Colorado Children's Campaign. "When we look more closely at the data, there are significant disparities between the children who are doing well in Colorado and those who are struggling, and those gaps often occur along racial, ethnic, and geographic lines. Until these gaps in student achievement, health access, poverty, and other indicators are closed, Colorado cannot accept an average rating."

Nationally, the *Data Book* reports that improvements in child well-being that began in the late 1990's stalled in the years that pre-dated the recent recession.

"It is important to note that the data in this year's *Data Book* do not reflect the current period of economic recession at the national level," said Laura Beavers, coordinator of the national KIDS COUNT project. "The economic indicators in our 2010 report come from the 2008 American Community Survey, which reflects information for the 12 months prior to the survey date. The economic downturn's effects were not felt by most U.S. families until the end of 2008 and into late 2009, with unemployment peaking in late 2009."

"The good news is that more teens in 2008 across all five of the largest racial and ethnic groups were either in school or had obtained a high school diploma or General Education Diploma compared with teens in 2000," noted Beavers. "The bad news is that we see that the rate of children living in poverty moved from 17 percent in 2000 to 18 percent in 2008 - this is an increase of at least 1 million more children. Experts project the child poverty rate to climb to above 20 percent when the Census Bureau releases more up-to-date statistics later this year."

*The Data Book* also provides a first look at state-level teen birth rates for 2007 and shows that after more than a decade of steady decline, the teen birth rate is on the rise. Although still below the rate in 2000, the teen birth rate increased from 40 to 43 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19 between 2005 and 2007. State rates vary dramatically from a low of 20 births per 1,000 in New Hampshire to a high of 72 per 1,000 in Mississippi.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and the new Data Center (<http://datacenter.kidscount.org>) provide a consistent, reliable source of information about children's well-being. Data on 10 key measures and hundreds of additional indicators are now available at the state, county, city level, and school district-level, providing policymakers, the media, and the public with the most comprehensive source of information.

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization, whose 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. For more information, visit [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).*

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* with state-by-state rankings and supplemental data launches at 12:01 a.m., July 27, 2010 at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>. Through the KIDS COUNT Data Center, users can download the complete *Data Book*, access hundreds of other measures of child well-being, and view real-time information on portable devices.

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