

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
July 27, 2010, 12:01 a.m., EDT

CONTACT: Kim Varner
202-842-3600, Ext. 254
kidscount@hagerssharp.com

Stephanie Mullholland
785-554-1317
Stephanie@kac.org

**2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book Released:
Kansas holding ground during hard times**

Kansas continues to rank 13th in the nation in a state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children. The 2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book, released today, shows that Kansas has improved in four areas affecting child well-being over the past decade, however, conditions have worsened for Kansas kids in another four areas evaluated by the study.

"Kansas is holding ground during these difficult times," said Shannon Cotsoradis, president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children. "But, the true test will be whether we can keep it up while the economy attempts to rebound. If we want to recession-proof our state for the long-haul, we can't drop the ball on Kansas kids now. They need health care, a good education and financial stability in order to grow up strong and ready to lead our state in the future."

The most notable change for Kansas was a worsening of the state's infant mortality rate, which put Kansas in the 40th spot – tied with Michigan – on this indicator. However, action taken by the Legislature this Session stands to address the high infant mortality rate in Kansas.

"Legislators took the first step this year, and it was just in time," said Cotsoradis. "Too many babies are dying in Kansas. Now, we'll be able to figure out why and put solutions in place to reverse this terrible trend."

Among the findings in this year's Data Book:

* **More infants are dying in Kansas.** Kansas tied with Michigan to rank 40th in the nation in terms of its infant mortality rate. In 2007, Kansas had 7.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, a 16 percent increase over its infant mortality rate in 2000.

* **More Kansas kids are living in poverty.** In 2008, 15 percent of children in Kansas lived in poverty, which has worsened since 2000 when the state saw 12 percent of its children living in poverty. (*Editor's Note: A family of two adults and two children were considered in poverty if their income in 2008 fell below \$21,834.*)

* **Kansas continues to rank high on four indicators.** Kansas ranked fifth in the percentage of teens not in school and not working; seventh in the percentage of children without secure parental employment; ninth in the percentage of children in single-parent families; and 10th in the percentage of teens who were not attending school and were not high school graduates.

For more detailed information about how Kansas ranks on child well-being, visit the online KIDS COUNT Data Center. The Data Center contains hundreds of measures of child well-being, and allows users to create maps and graphs of the data at the national, state and county levels. To access information about Kansas, go to <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/ks>.

#