



an independent voice for
all Nebraska's children

7521 Main Street, Suite 103
Omaha, NE 68127

402.597.3100 P
402.597.2705 F

www.voicesforchildren.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Kulas
President

Beverly Curry, Ph.D., CFLE
Vice President

Melissa Ruff, CPA
Treasurer

Nicole Theophilus, JD
Secretary

Thomas C. Woods, IV
Past President

Keith Allen, Ph.D.
Liliana Bronner, MHSA
Miguel A. Carranza, Ph.D.
Philip Heckman, Ph.D.
Angela Kelso
Luanne M. Nelson
Krisha Niemoth, MS, LMPH
Nancy M. Oberst
Deborah Suttle
Thomas Tonniges, MD

Kathy Bigsby Moore
Executive Director

A member of:



Voices
FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN

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

CONTACT: Melissa Breazile
402-597-3100 (office)
402-677-8794 (mobile)
kidscount@voicesforchildren.com

Jill Westfall
402-597-3100
jwestfall@voicesforchildren.com

2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book Shows Improvement in Child Well-Being but Gaps Remain

Omaha – According to the 2010 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Nebraska ranks number nine (on a scale of 1 to 50, 1 being best) nationally in a new state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children. That represents a two-point increase in the ranking since 2009. The 2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book reveals that since 2000, Nebraska improved on five of the 10 measures affecting child well-being. Yet on three other measures, conditions worsened. Two measures were not comparable to previous years.

- Five areas of improvement: infant mortality rate, child death rate, teen death rate, teen birth rate and percent of high school dropouts
- Three areas have worsened: percent of babies born at low weight, child poverty rate, and percent of children in single-parent families
- Two areas are not comparable, based on 2008 available data. This is due to changes in the American Community Survey's (ACS) questionnaire regarding employment and affecting the percent of teens not in school and not working, and the percent of children in families where no parent works full-time year-round.

Moreover, according to the 2010 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, Nebraska ranked among the top ten best on five of the ten indicators at the national level:

- 1st - the percentage of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment
- 1st - the percentage of teens not in school and not working
- 4th - the percentage of teens who are high school dropouts
- 6th - the percentage of children living in single-parent families
- 10th – the percentage of children living in poverty

“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 effects were not felt by most U.S. families until the end of 2008 and into late 2009, with unemployment peaking in late 2009.”

In a disturbing turn, Nebraska’s nationwide ranking in infant mortality plunged from 10th to 25th place between 2006 and 2007. Despite Nebraska’s improved infant mortality rate since the start of the decade, babies fared worse in 2007 than in 2006. The infant mortality rate increased from 5.6 to 6.8 deaths per 1,000 births between 2006 and 2007. The 2007 infant mortality rate is the state’s highest since 2002.

Voices for Children in Nebraska has always been a strong advocate of data-driven decision-making on the state level. While working with different state organizations, Voices has emphasized the importance of gathering, analyzing and sharing data to achieve real and lasting results for kids. Voices for Children has addressed the negative consequences of racial disparities and age gaps in data collection and the importance of data accuracy on the state level. According to Kathy Bigsby Moore, Executive Director of Voices for Children in Nebraska, “Advocating on behalf of Nebraska’s children and families, using the best available data, is a core value of Voices for Children in Nebraska.”

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.

Voices for Children in Nebraska is a member of the national KIDS COUNT Network that is sponsored and supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Voices for Children in Nebraska produces Nebraska’s annual Kids Count in Nebraska report, which documents the status of children in Nebraska and provides county-by-county indicators of child well-being.

###