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***New KIDS COUNT Report Ranks
North Carolina 37th in Child Well-Being***

Raleigh, NC. – Action for Children North Carolina announced today that, based on 2007 data, the new Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Book ranked North Carolina 37th in child well-being nationwide. The Data Book, released annually, is a state-by-state presentation on ten selected measures of the well-being of America’s children. It reveals that North Carolina has improved on five of the ten measures since the year 2000. Yet, on three other measures conditions worsened for North Carolina’s children. Two measures are not comparable to past years.

“While we are making progress, our national ranking is a reminder that we have a long way to go if we truly want North Carolina to be the best place to be and raise a child”, said Barbara Bradley, President and CEO of Action for Children North Carolina. “Public investments are critical for continued progress to occur. I fear that the budget reductions that have occurred as part of the current recession will cause future measures of child well-being to decline.”

Infant mortality rate remains stagnant.

After declining sharply during the 1990s, the infant mortality rate in North Carolina has remained stagnant since 2000. The 1997 rate of 8.5 infant deaths per 1000 live births ranked 45th in the nation.

Percentage of low-birthweight babies increases.

Low-birthweight (less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces) is associated with infant mortality. The five percent rise in this rate in the past decade portends great difficulty in reducing infant mortality in the near future. With 9.2 percent low-birthweight babies in 2007, North Carolina ranked 42nd on this measure.

Teen birth rate declines, then levels off.

Mirroring the national trend, North Carolina’s teen birth rate declined by fifteen percent since 2000. However, the 2007 rate of 50 births per 1000 females ages 15-19 was the same in 2006.

Share of teens not in school and not high school graduates cut in half.

In 2008, eight percent of North Carolina teens ages 16-19 were not enrolled in school and were not high school graduates. This is down from 16% in 2000.

The 21st annual Data book is complemented by the expanded 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 levels. To access information for North Carolina, go to <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/nc>.

Action for Children North Carolina is the states leading provider of nonpartisan research and data regarding children and youth. For more than 25 years, Action for Children has provided data, research, and technical assistance to organizations and individuals statewide. “Data and research are the core of our work”, said Bradley. “Every public policy, procedure or practice change recommended by Action for Children is data-driven and research-based.”