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***2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book Shows Oregon Making Progress to Protect Vulnerable Children
but Still Lags Behind National Average***

Portland, OR, July 27, 2010 – The *2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, released today ranks Oregon 18th in a state-by-state study on the well-being of America’s children. This is an improvement from last year’s *2009 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, where Oregon ranked 19th. While every step towards improvement should be applauded, the *Data Book* reveals that Oregon still has plenty of work to do when it comes to protecting children from poverty.

The 21st annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* indicators show:

- **The percent of Oregon children living in families without secure parental employment is higher than the national average.**

As Oregon’s unemployment rate remains steadily above the national average, new data shows that 29 percent of Oregon children are growing up in households where their families do not have secure employment. Recent cuts to Employment Related Day Care threaten even more families’ ability to keep working as they struggle to pay for child care.

- **The percent of Oregon children in poverty is steadily growing.**

The percentage of children under 18 living in poverty continues to increase. In Oregon, there are 154,198 children who are growing up in families with income at or below 100 % of the Federal Poverty Level (\$22,050 for a family of four).

“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.”

This has grave implications when you consider the effect that unemployment has on kids and families. Nationally, 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.

Executive Director of Children First for Oregon, Robin Christian expressed her concern about these preliminary statistics. “We know Oregon children and families are struggling and this early data helps illustrate that fact. What is more concerning is that this data doesn’t begin to represent the full effect the economic downturn has had on Oregon families. It is deeply concerning that we are cutting valuable programs to families when everything tells us they need help now more than ever. Now is the time to roll up our sleeves and work as a state to equip families with the necessary supports they need to participate in bringing our economy back on its feet.”

Founded in 1991, Children First is Oregon's most respected non-profit, non-partisan child advocacy organization committed to improving the lives of Oregon's vulnerable children and families. Our mission is to make long-term systemic change by advocating for the policies and programs that keep children healthy and safe and strengthen families. KIDS COUNT is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization that funds a nationwide network of projects that support disadvantaged children and families. www.cffo.org

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and the new Data Center (<http://datacenter.kidscount.org>) provide consistent, reliable 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 with the most comprehensive source of information.

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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