



NEWS



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CONTACTS:

John Morgan, Executive Director
804-649-0184, Ext. 26
john@vakids.org

Mary Dunne Stewart, Policy Director
804-649-0184, Ext. 24
mds@vakids.org

Social Media Release:

<http://www.facebook.com/VoicesforVAKids>

2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book Ranks Virginia Relatively Strong *Significant disparities among racial/ethnic groups exist*

Richmond, VA., July 27, 2010 – National and state indicators of child well-being have improved slightly since 2000, according to a report released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Voices for Virginia's Children.

The report ranks states annually according to data on ten core indicators. "Virginia's 2010 rank remains stable at 16, which is an indication that child well-being in Virginia is relatively strong and holding steady," according to John Morgan, Executive Director of Voices for Virginia's Children. "While Virginia's overall performance is better than most states, significant racial disparities exist. African American and Hispanic children are more likely than their White counterparts to have significantly worse outcomes on most indicators of child well-being."

"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."

Now in its 21st year, the KIDS COUNT Data Book provides information and statistical data showing trends over time in the needs and conditions of America's most disadvantaged children and families. The 21st Annual KIDS COUNT Data Book illustrates the following trends in the well-being of Virginia's Children:

Virginia ranks among top 10 states on secure parental employment.

In 2008, 23 percent of Virginia's children lived in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment—well below the U.S. rate of 27 percent. Among the 50 states, Virginia tied for 10th on this measure. But, 38 percent of African American children and 26 percent of Hispanic children lived in families lacking secure parental employment, compared to only 18 percent of Non-Hispanic White children.

Share of teens not in school and not high school graduates among lowest in the country.

The percentage of Virginia teens ages 16-19 who were not enrolled in school and were not high school graduates has fallen by more than half, from 9 percent in 2000 to 4 percent in 2008. Virginia tied for fourth nationally on this measure. Again, when considering race and ethnicity, children in African American and Hispanic families fare markedly worse. Ten percent of Hispanic teens and 6 percent of African American teens ages 16-19 were not enrolled in school and were not graduates compared to only 3 percent of Non-Hispanic White children.

Improvement in teen birth rate stalls.

In 2007, the teen birth rate in Virginia was 35 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19, a 15 percent drop from the 2000 rate. However, the rate did not change between 2006 and 2007.

Increase in low birthweight and infant mortality.

The share of low-birthweight babies in Virginia increased from 7.9 percent in 2000 to 8.6 percent in 2007. In 2007, 13 percent of African American babies were considered low-birthweight compared to only 7 percent of White babies. During that same period, the state's infant mortality rate rose 13 percent to 7.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The African American infant mortality rate is more than double the White rate; 12.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births versus a rate of 5.4. For both indicators, Virginia also performed worse than the previous year.

The 21st annual Data Book is complemented by the expanded Virginia 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 level. To access information for Virginia go to <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/va>.

Voices for Virginia's Children is a non-partisan, privately funded policy research and advocacy organization that champions public policies to improve the lives of Virginia's children. Voices is Virginia's KIDS COUNT entity. More information is available at www.vakids.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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