Outlook for Maryland’s Children Better in Education and Health, Child Poverty Stabilizes but at Higher Levels, KIDS COUNT report finds

BALTIMORE — As the nation’s economy recovers, Maryland’s children are showing some signs of improvement despite an ever-growing poverty rate, according to new data in the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 2013 KIDS COUNT® Data Book.

From 2005 to 2010, education and health indicators show that children continue to make progress in these domains. There was a 10 percent decline in the rate of high school students not graduating on time between the 2005/2006 and 2009/2010 school year, and the teen birth rate dropped by 16 percent between 2005 and 2010.

The economic well-being indicators have stabilized from 2010 to 2011; however, they do so at considerably higher levels than pre-recession. In 2011, the child poverty rate stood at 14 percent, or 179,000 children — an increase of 27 percent since 2005. The number of children living in households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing has stabilized after drastically increasing by 37 percent over a five year period. In 2011, it was more than 546,000 children—an improvement from 566,000 in the previous year. Similarly, the number of children whose parents lacked full-time, year-round employment was nearly 29 percent higher than in 2008.

“Although the poverty numbers are daunting, we have to continue to champion policy and programmatic solutions so that our children can have a positive spectrum of experiences,” said Al Passarella, Advocates for Children and Youth’s research coordinator.

“There is a short window of time that is critical to a child’s development and an impoverished environment can severely hinder this growth,” said Passarella. “As advocates we have to watch out for children when no one else does and continue to push for a solid foundation which allows Maryland’s children to thrive.”

The KIDS COUNT Data Book features the latest data on child well-being for every state, the District of Columbia and the nation. This information is available in the newly redesigned KIDS COUNT Data Center, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of measures of child well-being. Data Center users can create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and view real-time information on mobile devices.

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Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) is a statewide non-profit focused on improving the lives and experiences of Maryland’s children through policy change and program improvement. ACY champions solutions to child welfare, education, health, and juvenile justice issue in order to influence the full spectrum of youth experiences. This multi-issue platform helps ACY improve the entirety of children’s worlds—the systems they touch, the people they interact with, and the environment where they live. ACY is the Annie E. Casey KIDS COUNT research affiliate. You can learn more at www.acy.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.