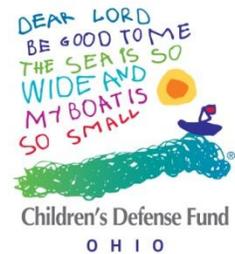


FOR RELEASE

June 12, 2012

Renuka Mayadev
614.221.2244
rmayadev@cdfohio.org



Children's Defense Fund-Ohio Report Paints Sobering Picture of Ohio's Children's Health and Well-Being

KIDS COUNT Data Book Examines Children's Health Access in Ohio

Columbus, OH - The Children's Defense Fund-Ohio (CDF-OH) announced today its release of the Ohio's KIDS COUNT: 2011 Data Book, an annual compilation of data that provides yearly snapshots of the well-being of Ohio's children at both the state and county levels. This year's book looks at how children across the state are faring in terms of their ability to access the resources needed to be healthy and successful.

In addition to measuring statewide and county specific data, the report also disaggregates Ohio's counties into four categories: metropolitan, suburban, Appalachian, and rural Non-Appalachian. These groupings reveal that children in different areas of Ohio face different challenges in achieving sound body and mind.

The report shows that economic security and race play important roles in determining whether or not a child will have a primary care provider, visit a dentist, or eat nutritious food.

Highlights include:

- **Economic Security** - Children's poverty has continued to climb, with 23.1% of Ohio's children living below the poverty line in 2010. The Appalachian and metropolitan areas of the state have the highest children's poverty rates, at 26.5% and 25.9%, respectively. The burden is highest among black children, who live in poverty at a staggering rate of 45.3%.
- **Food Access and Obesity** - 44% of Ohio children were enrolled in free and reduced lunch in 2010. In Appalachia, that rate is 50.5%, which contributes to the region's overweight and obesity rate of 39.9%. Children enrolled in free and reduced lunch are 30% more likely to be overweight or obese than other students.
- **Health Insurance** - 44.9% of Ohio children are enrolled in Medicaid. Suburban counties have the lowest rate of enrollment at 32.3%; however, the total uninsured rate for suburban children is over 20% higher than any other region.
- **Dental Care** - Dental care is the greatest unmet medical need amongst Ohio's children. In rural non-Appalachian counties 20.2% of children have no dental coverage. Ohio also has 68 Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA). The problem of Dental HPSAs is worst in Appalachian counties, which has led to 27% of Appalachian third graders having untreated tooth decay.

Indicator	Highest	Lowest
Median Income	Delaware County (\$85, 628)	Meigs County (\$33,194)

Child Poverty Rate	Pike County (36.9%)	Delaware County (6.6%)
3 rd Grade Overweight/Obesity	Hardin County (51.5%)	Geauga County (23.3%)
Babies Born at Low Birthweight	Cuyahoga County (10.5%)	Mercer County (3.6%)
Graduation Rate	Auglaize County (98.4%)	Marion County (57.9%)

The book provides county pages for all 88 counties, which examine 15 key indicators of general child well-being, as well as additional indicators specifically related to health access.

“Health is the most basic need of every child.” says Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio’s Executive Director, Renuka Mayadev. “If we do not provide children with the tools to build a strong mind and body, we cannot expect them to learn, develop, and prepare to become the leaders of tomorrow.”

Noting community bright spots, the book highlights three promising practices in our new Outstanding Ohio sections. From planting vegetables to building a new moms community to organizing a results-based system of health care, Local Matters, Moms2B, and the Community Health Access Project are putting data into action. Mayadev notes, “Knowing the statistics is only the first step toward solving the problem. It is up to all of us to put the next foot forward and work for change.”

On July 22-25 in Cincinnati, the Children’s Defense Fund’s action-oriented national conference will focus on the latest research, best practices, and community-building and youth empowerment strategies to close the gap between what we know works and what we actually do for our most vulnerable--children and the poor. For more information see the attached flyer or visit <http://www.childrensdefense.org/national-conference/>.

The electronic version of the Ohio’s KIDS COUNT: 2011 Data Book can be accessed online at <http://www.cdfohio.org/assets/pdf-files/2011-kids-count.pdf>. In addition to the Data Book, CDF-OH updates the Ohio’s KIDS COUNT Data Center, which provides all of the information found in the book and more and can be accessed online at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/StateLanding.aspx?state=OH>.

CDF-OH provides a strong, effective and independent voice for all the children of Ohio who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF-OH educates the public about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble or suffer family breakdown.

Ohio’s KIDS COUNT: 2011 Data Book is made possible by the generous support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

###