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PRESS RELEASE

For the Sixth Consecutive Year Ohio's Child Poverty Rate Outpaces the National Rate

Columbus, OH – The Children's Defense Fund-Ohio (CDF-OH) announces today its release of the Ohio's KIDS COUNT: 2013 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 emphasizes early childhood education indicators.

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. The report finds that there are distinct differences in children's well-being depending on the region in which they live.

The report shows that economic security and race play important roles in determining how often young children are read to, kindergarten readiness, fourth grade reading proficiency, and high school graduation.

Highlights include:

- **Child Poverty**. Nearly one quarter (23.9%) of Ohio's children live in poverty. The percentage of children in poverty has continued to rise despite improving economic conditions, and has outpaced the national rate since 2006. Appalachia and metropolitan areas have the highest rates of child poverty at 27.3% and 26.9% respectively.

- **Kindergarten Readiness**. Based on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRAL) test given to every child entering kindergarten in public school, there are clear disparities in kindergarten readiness when considering economic disadvantage, race and Hispanic ethnicity. A much higher percentage of children considered to be economically disadvantaged (30.2%) place in the lowest level compared to children without economic disadvantage (11.9%). More than half (51.9%) of children without economic disadvantage place in the top level while only a quarter (25.3%) of economically disadvantaged children do so.

- **Fourth Grade Reading Proficiency**. In the 2010-2011 school year, 83.8% of children in Ohio scored proficient or better on the standardized Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA) indicating that they were reading at or above grade level. A disproportionate percentage of Black (36%) and Hispanic children (25%) scored below proficient compared to White (12%), Asian (9%), and Multi-racial (19%) children.

- **High School Graduation**. Overall, 84% of children graduate on time from high school in Ohio. Students in metropolitan areas have the lowest graduation rates (78%) of all the regions in the state. Children who are Black, Hispanic, or considered economically disadvantaged graduate at much lower percentages than the state average (Black- 65%, Hispanic – 63%, economically disadvantaged- 75%).

Examples of KIDS COUNT data by county include:

Indicator	Ohio Data	Highest County	Lowest County
Children Living in Poverty	23.9%	Vinton (38.6%)	Delaware (5.8%)
Free and Reduced Lunch Participation	45.3%	Vinton (65.5%)	Delaware (15.7%)
Fourth Grade Reading Proficiency (proficient or better)	83.8%	Warren (95.1%)	Pike (73.2%)
High School Graduation	84%	Auglaize (98%)	Marion (58%)

These troubling findings demonstrate that more work must be done to ensure Ohio's children have the proper start in life. "Enthusiasm for the economic recovery - the Dow's most recent record high and gains in housing prices -- is masking the cry of our children, " notes Children's Defense Fund-Ohio's Executive Director, Renuka Mayadev. "For six consecutive years our child poverty rate has been higher than the national rate. When will we say stop -- no additional Ohio children can fall into poverty?"

The Data Book can be found online in the Research Library at www.cdfohio.org. County information pages with data for each of Ohio's 88 counties are available for download at www.cdfohio.org. The national KIDS COUNT Data Center also provides tools for comparing states and counties, creating graphs and maps, and tracking data over time. The Data Center website is www.datacenter.kidscount.org.

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The Data Book is produced by the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio. The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

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