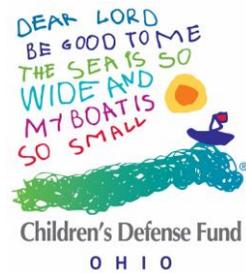


UNDER EMBARGO until Tuesday, July 21, 2015, 12:01 a.m. EDT

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New *KIDS COUNT Data Book*: Ohio Children Continue to Struggle Despite Economic Recovery

COLUMBUS – About 53,000 more Ohio children live in low-income working families today than in 2008, and Ohio's child poverty rate remains higher today than during the Great Recession, according to the newly released 2015 *KIDS COUNT*® *Data Book* from the Annie. E. Casey Foundation.

The 2015 *Data Book*, which focuses on key trends in child well-being in the post-recession years, measures child well-being in four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Today, the Casey Foundation reveals that the rising tide of recovery in the form of increasing employment and concentrated wealth has left stagnant pockets of low-income, struggling communities and families, where a child's future is anchored in scarcity and hardship.

“Although we are several years past the end of the recession, millions of families across the country still have not benefited from the economic recovery,” said Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of the Casey Foundation. “While we've seen an increase in employment in recent years, many of these jobs are low-wage and cannot support even basic family expenses. Far too many families are still struggling to provide for the day-to-day needs of their children, notably for the 16 million children who are living in poverty. We can and must do better: we can make policy choices to lift more families into economic stability.”

National and state rankings for the 2015 *Data Book*

Minnesota holds the top spot in overall child well-being, followed by New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Iowa, and Vermont. Arizona, Nevada, Louisiana, New Mexico and Mississippi rank lowest. For the sixth straight year, Ohio hovers in the middle range, with a rank of 23.

Poverty is persistent in many neighborhoods

As the number of children living in low-income families expands, at an even more desperate economic level, one in five children is still stranded in poverty. Moreover, the number of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods – where poverty rates are more than 30 percent -- is the highest since 1990.

- Since 2008, the number of children living in poverty has risen by almost 3 million, from 13.2 million to 16.1 million today. Nearly 100,000 more Ohio children are poor than in 2008.

- At a rate of 22 percent in 2013, the rate of child poverty is still several percentage points higher than before the recession, when it was 18 percent. Ohio's child poverty rate rose from 19 to 23 percent during this same time frame. Thirty states have lower child poverty rates than Ohio.
- Today, almost one in seven children -- 14 percent -- live in high poverty communities, both nationally and in Ohio.
- More than two million more children live in areas of concentrated poverty today than 2006-2010.

Recovery sidesteps children of color

Race is one of the strongest factors influencing a child's economic stability. Data show the economic recovery of the past five years has bypassed many children of color. Rates of unemployment at the close of 2014 were in single digits for all races except African Americans. African Americans were also the only group for whom unemployment remains higher than before the recession.

- African-American children are twice as likely as the average child to live in high-poverty neighborhoods and to live in single-parent families. In Ohio, nearly half of all African-American children are poor and they are three times as likely as the average child to live in high poverty areas.
- Latino children nationally and in Ohio are the most likely to live with a household head who lacks a high school diploma.

"Despite the economic recovery, nearly one in four Ohio children continues to live below the poverty line. The data show that wide gaps remain between the living standards of many children of color and other children," said Dawn Wallace-Pascoe, KIDS COUNT Project Manager at Children's Defense Fund-Ohio. "The time is now for Ohio to get serious about ending child poverty, reducing economic, educational, and health disparities, and improving well-being for all children."

Solutions that provide opportunity for all children

National and state level policies have proved that investments in health and education can create lasting positive differences for children. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides low-cost health coverage to children, was implemented 15 years ago and has drastically reduced the number of children without health insurance. In addition, tax credits and food stamps have helped to lift people out of poverty; however even with these supports, millions of low-income families still struggle with basic provisioning for their children.

The Casey Foundation offers a number of recommendations to make good on the American promise of opportunity for all children. The Foundation promotes a two-generation strategy that simultaneously addresses the needs of children directly while providing tools and resources to their parents. Three critical strategies include:

- Provide parents with multiple pathways to get family-supporting jobs and achieve financial stability.
- Ensure access to high-quality early childhood education and enriching elementary school experiences.
- Equip parents to better support their children socially and emotionally and to advocate for their children's education.

The 2015 Data Book will be available July 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at <http://databook.kidscount.org>, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. The Data Center allows users to create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and to view real-time information on mobile devices.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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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