

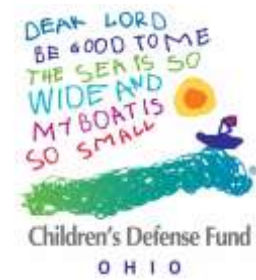
EMBARGOED UNTIL July 22, 2014, 12:01 a.m. EDT

Annie E. Casey Foundation Contacts:

Pat Enright Kaplan | 202.706.7401 | PEKaplan@hagersharp.com
Sue Lin Chong | 410.223.2836 | media@aecf.org

Children's Defense Fund-Ohio Contacts:

Dawn Wallace-Pascoe | 614.221.2244 | dwallacepascoe@childrensdefense.org
Renuka Mayadev | 614.221.2244 | rmayadev@childrensdefense.org



Twenty-fifth Edition of *KIDS COUNT Data Book* Highlights Improvements in Health, Safety, Education and Decline in Teen Birth Rate Since 1990
Ohio Falls Behind on Child Poverty, Parental Employment, and Children in Single-Parent Families

COLUMBUS – More children are living in poverty across the nation and in Ohio, but more children are also attending preschool and doing better in math and reading, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 25th edition of its annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. The *Data Book* is an annual compilation of child well-being indicators, which show how well Ohio children are doing as compared to children across the United States. This year's *Data Book* highlights trends since 1990.

The 2014 *Data Book* has other good news, besides improvements in preschool enrollment and math and reading proficiency: a smaller percentage of children live in families in which no parent has a high school diploma – from 22 percent nationally in 1990 to 15 percent in 2012. In addition, the teen birth rate is at a historic low and death rates for children and teens have fallen as a result of medical advances and increased usage of seat belts, car seats, and bike helmets.

Worrisome trends include a rise in the official child poverty rate. Although the rate dropped from 18 to 16 percent from 1990 to 2000, it reached 22 percent by 2010 and has remained at roughly that level. In 2012, nearly 16.4 million children were living in poverty in the U.S. The percentage of children living in single-parent families has also risen significantly – in 1990, 25 percent of children lived in a single-parent household, and by 2012 the figure had risen to 35 percent. Since 1990, the rate of children growing up in poor communities has also increased, with 13 percent of children living in a neighborhood where the poverty rate is 30 percent or more.

"We've seen the difference that smart policies, effective programs and high quality practice can make in improving child well-being and long term outcomes. We should all be encouraged by the improvements in many well-being indicators in the health, education and safety areas," said Patrick McCarthy, the Foundation's president and CEO. "But we must do much more. All of us, in every sector – business, government, nonprofits, faith-based groups, families – need to continue to work together to ensure that all children have the chance to succeed. We should strengthen our commitment and redouble our efforts until every child in America develops to full potential."

To examine recent trends between 2005 and 2012, the new *Data Book* uses 16 indicators across four

areas – Economic Well-Being, Education, Health and Family and Community. Nationally:

- **Children continue to progress in the areas of education and health.** All four education indicators covering milestones such as preschool attendance and high school graduation showed steady improvements. Child health also improved across all four indicators, including access to health insurance, child and teen mortality, teen substance abuse, and low birth weight babies.
- **Economic progress still lags, even after the end of the recession.** Three of the four economic well-being indicators were worse than the mid-decade years. However, the majority of the indicators in this area improved slightly at the national level since the 2013 *Data Book*, indicating modest but hopeful signs of recovery.
- **Mixed picture on Family and Community indicators.** The teen birth rate is at a historic low. There was a small drop in the percent of children living in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma. However, there was an increase in the percent of children living in single-parent families and more children living in high-poverty areas.

At the state level, Massachusetts, Vermont, Iowa, New Hampshire and Minnesota rank highest for overall child well-being, while Arizona, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico and Mississippi rank lowest.

Ohio's overall rank on the 16 child well-being indicators was 24th. Following national trends, Ohio improved on all education and health indicators since 2005. However, Ohio falls behind other states in Economic Well-Being and Family and Community indicators. Ohio ranks 32nd for the percent of children in poverty, 28th for children whose parents lack secure employment, 35th for children in single parent families, and 36th for children living in high-poverty neighborhoods.

"It is encouraging to see positive trends for Ohio's children on several of the indicators," says Dawn Wallace-Pascoe, KIDS COUNT project manager at Children's Defense Fund-Ohio. "However, the *Data Book's* findings send a clear signal that we need to focus on reducing child poverty, addressing the prevalence of children growing up in high-poverty neighborhoods, and finding secure employment for parents if we are to improve well-being for all children in our state."

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 [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.

###

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.