



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Close to 70 percent of South Carolina's children not proficient in reading, math by grade level milestones**

#### ***State Remains in Bottom 10 Percent for Child Well-Being***

**July 22, 2014 (Columbia, S.C.)** – The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* shows South Carolina remains 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation in child well-being. While South Carolina children are showing progress in some areas, the progress is not significant enough for South Carolina's children to move out of the bottom 10 percent of the country.

"Most alarming are the education and poverty measures," said Children's Trust Chief Executive Officer Sue Williams. "With education, families can lift themselves out of poverty and greatly reduce the stressors that can lead to child abuse and neglect."

Williams adds, "Education is critically important for future success and family stability. Too many of South Carolina's children are missing important educational milestones. The data is painting a very alarming picture for South Carolina's future."

South Carolina's children struggle in education and economic well-being. For example:

- 57 percent are not attending preschool.
- 72 percent of fourth graders are not proficient in reading.
- 69 percent of eighth graders are not proficient in math.
- 27 percent of children live in poverty.

For children of color, the numbers are even more disparate. Only 13 percent of African-American children are reading proficiently by fourth grade and have math proficiency by eighth grade.

"If South Carolina is to thrive in a global marketplace, we must pay attention to these warning signs and work to change these statistics," added Williams.

Produced since 1990, this is the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. South Carolina has not achieved a ranking higher than 42 since the beginning of the KIDS COUNT project.

Children's Trust is the KIDS COUNT grantee for South Carolina. 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 report and South Carolina fact sheet is available on The Casey Foundation [website](#) and on the Children's Trust website at [www.scChildren.org](http://www.scChildren.org).

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*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](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.*

*Children's Trust of South Carolina is the only statewide organization dedicated to strengthening and supporting public and private prevention efforts that keep South Carolina's children safe. It works to prevent child abuse, neglect and unintentional injuries so every child has the opportunity to thrive in a healthy, nurturing environment. Children's Trust is home to KIDS COUNT South Carolina, Safe Kids South Carolina, Prevent Child Abuse South Carolina and other programs that deliver on this mission. For more information, visit [scChildren.org](http://scChildren.org).*