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CONTACT:

Haley Pollock, Director of Communications and Outreach

785-232-0550

haley@kac.org

**26th edition of *KIDS COUNT Data Book*
shows Kansas failing to keep pace with nation**

TOPEKA— As the national economy continues to improve, the economic well-being of children in Kansas fails to recover from the Great Recession, according to the latest *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

This year marks the 26th edition of the *Data Book*, which ranks each state in 16 indicators of child well-being in four domains: economic well-being, education, health and family and community. Kansas ranks 15th overall this year, unchanged from 2014.

One troubling finding from the report is that Kansas had one of the largest increases in the country of children living in high-poverty areas. Since 2008, the number of children living in high-poverty areas has increased significantly.

Overall, Kansas dropped two spots from last year in the economic well-being indicator. Kansas saw three of its economic well-being indicators worsen. Most significantly, the percentage of Kansas children living in poverty has risen from 15 percent in 2008 to 19 percent in 2013.

“This should be a time of growing prosperity for Kansas children and families, but instead we are mostly stagnant,” said Shannon Cotsoradis, president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children. “Our state’s unsustainable tax structure threw Kansas into a dangerous, perpetual budget crisis. As long as the Kansas budget is stuck in recession-era levels of investment, Kansas children will be stuck with a recession-era quality of life.”

While Kansas has shown improvement in health indicators, progress is not keeping pace with other states. The percentage of children without health insurance has decreased from eight percent in 2008 to six percent in 2013. In that same time period, the nation experienced a three percent decrease in children without health insurance.

“Even when we’re making progress, those gains are failing to keep up with the rest of the nation,” Cotsoradis said. “We’re falling behind instead of enacting smart policies that would change the lives of Kansas kids for the better.”

Other highlights from the *Data Book*:

- From 2008 to 2013, the number of Kansas children living in high poverty areas increased to 64,000, or nine percent, compared to two percent in 2000.
- The teen birth rate improved to 30 per 1,000 births in 2013 from 34 per 1,000 births in 2012.
- 62 percent of Kansas fourth-graders scored below proficient in reading.
- The percentage of children not attending preschool shows Kansas sliding below the national average, from 54 percent in 2012 to 56 percent in 2013.

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 wellbeing. 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 2015 Data Book will be available July 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. 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.

For more than 30 years, Kansas Action for Children has worked to shape health, education and economic policy that puts children first. Visit kac.org to learn more about our policy priorities and to view KIDS COUNT data at the state and county levels. This October, KAC will issue the Kansas KIDS COUNT report with updated county-level data.

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