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

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41,000 More Children Live in Poverty Today Than in Midst of Great Recession in 2008

Last time Virginia child poverty was more than 16 percent was in 1997.

Richmond – The rising tide of economic recovery did not lift all boats, according to the newly released KIDS COUNT Data Book. Rather, it left thousands of Virginians shipwrecked.

Forty-one thousand more children live in poverty today than during the Great Recession, according to the 2015 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* from the [Annie. E. Casey Foundation](#). The total number of children in poverty in Virginia is now 288,000 or 16 percent of the total population. Children in families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level include children in poverty and children in families near poverty. More than 630,000 or 34 percent of Virginia's children are now living in these low-income families. These families cannot meet their basic family needs.

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 over a half million low-income, struggling families in Virginia, where a child's future is anchored in scarcity and hardship.

“Although we are several years past the end of the recession, hundreds of thousands Virginia families have not benefited from the economic recovery,” said Ted Groves, KIDS COUNT Director at Voices for Virginia’s Children. “Even though we’ve seen an increase in employment for parents in recent years, many of these jobs are low-wage and cannot support even basic family needs. The outcome is that hundreds of thousands of families are still struggling to provide for the day-to-day needs of their children.”

National and State Rankings for 2015 *Data Book*

For the first time in years the overall well-being of Virginia’s children worsened: the ranking went from 11 last year to 14 this year, in part because of the increased child poverty rate.

Solutions that provide opportunity for all 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 kids' education.

The Casey Foundation recommends policies that result in higher pay, paid sick leave, flexible scheduling and expanded unemployment benefits that will result in higher family income, reduced parental stress and an increased capacity of parents to invest in their kids. Detailed recommendations can be found in the 2014 report, [Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach](#).

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.

Virginia data in the KIDS COUNT Data Center can also be found at <http://bit.ly/vakidscount>. Virginia's KIDS COUNT webpage can be found at Voices for Virginia's Children, <http://bit.ly/vakidscountdata>.

About Voices for Virginia's Children

Voices for Virginia's Children is a statewide independent, nonpartisan policy research and advocacy organization that champions public policies to improve the lives of Virginia's children. Voices is home to the Virginia KIDS COUNT Data Center.

For questions on Virginia data, please contact KIDS COUNT Director Ted Groves at ted@vakids.org or 804-649-0184 x 22.

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