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**Two Out of Every Five D.C. Children Live in Families
Where Parents Lack Secure Employment**

*More than a quarter of DC kids live in poverty, D.C. shows gains in health and education
according to 2016 KIDS COUNT Data Book*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Forty percent of children who call the District of Columbia home live in families where their parents lack secure, full-time, year-round employment, according to the 2016 *KIDS COUNT*[®] *Data Book* released by the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#). In order to reach their full potential, it is crucial that all D.C. children live in economically secure families. However, economic stability is not a reality for many children in the District: more than half of D.C. children live in single-parent families and 26 percent of DC children live in poverty— a percentage that has not seen positive improvement over the past six years.

The 2016 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* focuses on key trends in child well-being measured in four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Today, the Annie E. Casey Foundation highlights the persistent reality that many children today are growing up without foundations from which they can succeed.

“The *KIDS COUNT* report reflects that too many children in the District are growing up in conditions that do not support their ability to succeed in school and in life,” said HyeSook Chung, executive director of DC Action for Children. “As we have seen first-hand with the District’s huge strides in establishing a universal Pre-K program and securing access to health care coverage, we know that when District leaders work together to align resources that prioritize the well-being of children, we can make a vast difference. All of us need to work smarter to ensure that all of our children and their families can thrive.”

KIDS COUNT data illustrate a reality of continued economic instability for D.C. children and families:

- Over one quarter of children (26 percent) live in poverty. Between 2008 and 2014, the percentage of children living in poverty has not seen positive improvement.
- 36 percent of children live in families with a high housing cost burden. These children live in families that spend 30 percent or more of their pre-tax income on housing, leaving parents/caretakers with fewer resources to spend on basic needs.
- 10 percent of teens are not in school and not working, an 11 percent increase since 2008. This represents the number of youth ages 16 to 19 who are not engaged and may face significant economic hardship as they transition to adulthood.

Despite continued economic instability, *KIDS COUNT* data highlight noteworthy gains in health and education indicators:

- The teen birth rate decreased dramatically by 45 percent between 2008 and 2014.
- The percent of D.C. children ages 3 and 4 not attending school is the lowest in nation at 19 percent, significantly lower than the national average of 53 percent.

- Fourth-grade reading proficiency increased by 15 percent between 2007 and 2015. However, there is a long way to go: in 2015, 73 percent of D.C. children scored below proficient in reading.

Some of these improvements, in part, may reflect the D.C. area's relatively healthy economy, despite the slow recovery from the national recession, as well as rapidly changing demographics.

In the *Data Book*, the Annie E. Casey Foundation offers a number of recommendations for how policy makers can ensure that all children are prepared for the future:

- **OPPORTUNITY:** Increase opportunity by expanding access to high-quality early care and education programs so that all children are prepared to succeed in school. In addition, expand access to higher education and job training so that children and parents in low-income families have a fair chance to succeed and thrive.
- **SECURITY:** Increase policies that ensure all families have a measure of security, particularly low-income parents of young children, by providing paid family leave that supports parents as they balance their responsibilities at home and in the workplace.

The 2016 *Data Book* will be available June 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. Because of disparities among D.C. neighborhoods, city-wide data do not tell the whole story of how children and youth are doing. More localized and nuanced D.C. KIDS COUNT data, analyzed at the neighborhood level, is through our [DC KIDS COUNT Data Tool 2.0](#).

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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. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Founded in 1992, [DC Action for Children](#) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization focused on improving conditions and outcomes for the District's children, youth and families through public awareness, policy, research and technical assistance. DC Action is the KIDS COUNT grantee for the District, tracking key indicators of child and youth well-being and neighborhood well-being for children and youth. Follow us on Twitter at [@ActforDChildren](#) and like us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/dcaction>.