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HOOSIER CHILDREN SEE IMPROVEMENTS IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION, STILL FACE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Indiana's national ranking improves in the latest KIDS COUNT Data Book report on child well-being from the Annie E. Casey Foundation

INDIANAPOLIS. – Indiana's young people are leading healthier lifestyles and making strides in school, but more needs to be done to address the high number of children living in poverty in the Hoosier state, according to the newly released 2016 *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* from the Annie. E. Casey Foundation.

Indiana now ranks 30th in the nation for overall child well-being, up two positions from its ranking in the 2015 report. Other rankings include:

- 23rd for education, up from 25th in the 2015 report
- 24th for economic well-being, a drop of one position from last year
- 31st for child health, a four-position improvement from the previous year
- 32nd in the family and community category, slipping from 31st in 2015

"It's encouraging to see Indiana move up in the overall child well-being, education and child health rankings," says Tami Silverman, president and CEO of the Indiana Youth Institute. "When we see improvements in these key areas, it means there is hope for a brighter future for our youth, our state and all Hoosiers."

A closer look at the data reveals advances that keep Indiana in step with the rest of the nation. The data show a 32 percent drop in Hoosier teen birth rates from 2008 to 2014; a 39 percent drop in the percentage of kids abusing drugs and alcohol between the 2007/2008 and 2013/2014 school years; and a 27 percent improvement in teens who did not graduate high school on time between the 2007/2008 and 2012/2013 school years.

“Getting a high school diploma on time is the first step in setting Hoosier students up for success in their postsecondary plans,” says Silverman. “Whether those plans include going to college, beginning an apprenticeship or heading right into Indiana’s workforce, a high school diploma is critical to a more economically secure future.”

Despite these positive gains, Indiana’s children are still struggling economically. National data show that 22 percent of Hoosier kids live in poverty—a 22 percent increase in that percentage from the height of the recession in 2008. Indiana also saw a 63 percent increase in the percent of children living in high-poverty areas.

“While we’ve seen improvements in some areas, poverty isn’t one of them,” Silverman says. “Historically, poverty tends to lag behind other indicators in a post-recession recovery, which means many families are still struggling to provide for basic needs, such as food, medicine, shelter and clothing.”

The report also shows an increase in the number of children living in single-parent households, as well as homes where neither parent has full-time, year-round employment.

While the national 2016 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* shows the state continues to lag behind the nation in several areas, there are other bright spots in the report:

- 93 percent of Hoosier children had health insurance in 2014, up from 90 percent in 2008
- The death rate per 100,000 dropped from 34 in 2008 to 27 in 2014 for children ages 1-19
- 40 percent of Indiana’s fourth graders scored proficient or better in reading on national tests in 2015, up from 33 percent in 2007
- 39 percent of eighth graders scored proficient or better at math in 2015, an improvement from 35 percent in 2007

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* features the latest data on child well-being for every state, the District of Columbia and the nation and is available at www.aecf.org on June 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT.

The Indiana Youth Institute promotes the healthy development of children and youth by serving the people, institutions and communities that impact their well-being.

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An embargoed copy of the national KIDS COUNT® Data Book is available online for media only at this time. The Indiana Youth Institute produces the separate KIDS COUNT® in Indiana Data Book each

February, which includes state- and county-level data that is not comparable to the data found in this report. More detailed data searches may be conducted using the KIDS COUNT® Data Center via www.iyi.org/datacenter or by contacting the Indiana Youth Institute directly.

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.