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UNDER EMBARGO Until Monday, June 17th at 12:01 a.m. ET

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Connecticut Children Living Less Economically Secure than Three Decades Ago
New Data Shows More Children Living in Concentrated Poverty with Fewer Opportunities

Hartford, Connecticut — Compared to three decades ago, more Connecticut children are living in poverty and in families without secure employment, according to the 30th edition of the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Once nationally ranked in the top five states, Connecticut continues to fall further behind. Connecticut has dropped for the third year in row to an overall eighth-place rank, and continues to trend downward in economic well-being, now ranking 18th in that domain.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* — the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States — notes measurable national progress since the first *Data Book*, which was published in 1990. Nevertheless, more than 13 million U.S. children live in poverty alongside persistent, serious racial and ethnic disparities. The *Data Book* reflects on the last 30 years, and how much we have moved the needle in favor of policies that directly impact the well-being of our nation's children.

While Connecticut has reduced teen pregnancy and improved youth engagement in school and work, our rankings mask significant racial disparities in almost all of the 16 KIDS COUNT indicators.

- From 1990 to 2017, the number of children living in poverty increased 30 percent (10-13 percent). No doubt, this is disturbing, but of more concern are the disparate patterns that emerge when the data is disaggregated by race and ethnicity.
- Over the period 2005–2017, the rates of child poverty have been relatively stable for white children (4-6 percent), while those for Black and Latinx children have fluctuated from 20 percent to 34 percent and have tracked the impact of the recession and recovery more closely. The recession clearly impacted children of color more than white children, as seen within the recovery period when Latinx and Black children were as much as six times more likely to be living in poverty than their white counterparts.
- Over the past 30 years, Connecticut has seen a 60 percent increase of children living in high-poverty areas and the racial disparities are profound — 1 in 5 black children and 1 in 5 Latinx children live in concentrated poverty compared to 1 in 100 white children. Research tells us that the deleterious effects of poverty on a developing child are compounded if the child is living in concentrated poverty. The effects of living in areas of concentrated poverty are severe. They are associated with less school

funding, fewer investments in the community, and kids struggling to succeed with fewer resources and opportunities.

- In 2019, Connecticut saw a worsening in three out of the four measures of economic well-being. In 1990, Connecticut ranked 11th for secure parental employment; we have now fallen to 42nd. While the share of children living in families with insecure parental employment has seen a nationwide 13 percent decrease, Connecticut has seen an increase by 30 percent. Connecticut is seeing some slow improvement in this area over the past few years, but 26 percent of children are still living in families without secure parental employment. Clearly, we need to do more to provide opportunities for parents, which will allow children to grow up in economically secure families.

“The data in this report represent progress toward overall child well-being and equity over a generation. Connecticut has made some progress in several key areas, but there is also reason for concern. Children live and grow in families. When parents do better educationally, they also do better economically and their children have better outcomes. As the 1990 generation of children reached adulthood, a higher percentage of their children are now living in families where no parent has secure employment, a higher percentage of their children are living in poverty, and we have made little progress in addressing severe inequity. To reverse this trend, and meet the skilled workforce needs of employers, we need to make targeted and substantial investments in a whole-family approach to jobs. We need to emphasize both adult learning and skills development, combined with a fully funded system of early care and education that meets the needs of all families, whether working or learning. Two-generation targeted investments can give families the opportunity to become economically secure with thriving children. Connecticut will prosper from shared economic well-being, and all of us will benefit,” said Liz Fraser, Policy Director of Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS).

Not all of Connecticut’s rankings have suffered, especially in the education domain. In two of the four indicators — fourth-grade English proficiency and young children in preschool — Connecticut ranked in the top three. Yet 80-90 percent of black and Latinx children, are not meeting eighth-grade mathematics proficiency levels compared to 40-55 percent of white and Asian students. This raises the question: How does a state doing so well in education — *a factor considered a cornerstone for economic success* — not realize these benefits? A starting point would be to unmask where large disparities by race and ethnicity exist. Knowing that a portion of our students are succeeding but a growing number are being left behind clearly makes a strong case for the need to focus on disaggregated data to identify gaps and develop effective programmatic and policy solutions that allow all children to succeed.

Says CAHS’ Chief Research and Evaluation Officer Sheryl Horowitz: “KIDS COUNT’s education indicators show a relatively stable Connecticut that is gradually improving. The problem is that this is not the whole story. As long as Connecticut maintains a large percentage of white residents, which is still the case in many of our towns, the state projects an image of well-being for its children. The real story is found below this surface, within the differences between racial and ethnic groups. In three of the four measures, black and Latinx children are consistently scoring between 10 to 30 percentage points lower than their white counterparts. While the educational measures we use may not be directly responsible for the level of economic growth and stability in the state, research says there is a strong relationship. If we are to maintain our position as a leader in child welfare and be a state that provides a high quality of life, we need to expose and redress the sources that limit our ability to grow and prosper and that involves actively working toward equity in all the KIDS COUNT domains.”

Connecticut's policies need a more comprehensive approach to child well-being and need to address inequities in the communities our children grow up in. To help children grow mentally and physically strong with a prosperous future, state policy needs to address its families in economic crisis. While the state's children and families were declining in economic well-being from 1990 to 2019, the state budget reflected priorities shifting away from children's issues, resulting in a 21 percent decrease in the amount invested into their futures during the same time period. Sustained investments can help children thrive from an early age and will ultimately lift all Connecticut residents as the state prospers from shared economic well-being.

Release Information

The *2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* will be available June 17 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org/databook. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the Data Book can use the KIDS COUNT® Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

About the Connecticut Association for Human Services

Founded in 1910, Connecticut Association for Human Services promotes family economic security strategies that empower low-income working families to achieve financial independence. Our mission is to end poverty and engage, equip and empower all families in Connecticut to build a secure future.

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

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.