



The Annie E. Casey Foundation

# 2009 KIDS COUNT

## DATA BRIEF

### Counting What Counts

#### Taking Results Seriously for Vulnerable Children and Families

This year marks the 20th edition of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, the 20th time that the Annie E. Casey Foundation has amassed critically important data on the well-being of our nation's children and families into a single, easy-to-access volume that is now backed by an extensive online data system. Our Foundation has invested millions of dollars to produce and distribute these *Data Books* and to underwrite advocacy efforts aimed at bringing data to the public's attention and promoting appropriate policy responses. We have made these investments based on our conviction that data-driven decision-making offers a powerful—and sorely underutilized—tool to improve results for children. Results always matter. But they take on added importance in this time of economic crisis. The threat is especially dire for children born to families mired in poverty, whose well-being depends on the quality of support provided by government-financed systems that are increasingly strapped for cash.

#### The Merits of Measuring

In our own experiences and those of our grantees, we've seen how good data, when used properly, can powerfully boost the effectiveness of human service programs and improve the lives of vulnerable children—particularly when tied to a purposeful advocacy campaign.

Data-driven advocacy can help illuminate the need for new programs and better policies and foster a more targeted distribution of

public resources. Rigorous data analyses and effective use of modern information technologies can increase worker productivity, reduce waste, diagnose and solve common problems, and help authorities understand and begin eliminating the racial disparities that plague public systems serving disadvantaged children and families.

Seizing these opportunities, however, is neither automatic nor inevitable. Rather, progress requires purposeful investment to collect the necessary data, and it demands that leaders in both the public and private sectors build the capacity to put those data to effective use.

#### A Call for Action

At the federal level, there have been significant improvements in government efforts to collect information on the circumstances and well-being of U.S. residents. For example, for years, most demographic data were compiled only once every decade through the constitutionally mandated census. Today, the U.S. Census Bureau conducts the American Community Survey that collects detailed information from 3 million households every year and includes many measures related to children.

Congress has increased data and reporting requirements for many programs receiving federal support and established high-stakes performance goals for several programs and systems that affect children's well-being. Likewise, many state and local governments have begun measuring systems and programs

against quantitative performance goals and issuing local-level report cards to assess progress.

These developments are encouraging, but nowhere near sufficient. The advances made at the federal, state, and community levels to effectively collect and use data to address challenges and create meaningful opportunities continue to fall far short of what is possible, what is needed, and what is demanded by the current technology environment. Systems and organizations charged with helping disadvantaged families and communities succeed must capitalize on new opportunities afforded by today's information revolution to bolster their efforts to measure and improve outcomes.

The Casey Foundation recommends enacting reforms that transform how data are used to help achieve better outcomes for vulnerable children. These include the following:

■ **Develop high-quality data systems at the federal level:** Key recommendations include fully funding, properly managing, and successfully promoting the 2010 Census; updating the U.S. poverty measure; increasing data collection on child and family well-being; and addressing problems in the National Vital Statistics System.

■ **Improve performance measurement at the state and local levels:** Steps that can be taken include enhancing administrative databases, improving data analysis, promoting data-

driven practice improvements, and expanding the use of new information technologies.

■ **Engage children's advocates and other concerned leaders:** Awareness and mobilization efforts include employing data-driven advocacy, identifying critical benchmarks, and using neighborhood indicators and community mapping to clarify challenges and identify opportunities for helping families succeed.

### Conclusion

Despite budget shortfalls, now is the wrong time to scale back investments that will yield a long-range and long-lasting payoff in reduced waste and improved efficiency. In fact, it is more critical now than ever to have accurate data that show how American families are faring in the current economic downturn and have systems that are equipped to use this information to improve the well-being of those children and families most in need.

Although many promising efforts have already been demonstrated and worthy proposals have been introduced that advance the merits of measuring progress and mastering the use of new technologies to sustain it, there is still much work to be done. The Annie E. Casey Foundation plans to continue our commitment to data-based accountability by investing in the improvement and use of data by systems that serve vulnerable children. We call upon our partners and our leaders at all levels to do the same.

**It is more critical now than ever to have accurate data that show how American families are faring in the current economic downturn and have systems that are equipped to use this information to improve the well-being of those children and families most in need.**

Find the entire Essay at the KIDS COUNT  
Data Center: [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)



The KIDS COUNT Data Center provides easy online access to the latest data on child well-being nationwide. Find hundreds of indicators on such topics as education, employment and income, health, poverty, and youth risk factors for all U.S. states and many cities, counties, and school districts. Advocates, journalists, policymakers, practitioners, and all concerned citizens can find data for planning, preparing reports, crafting policies, or identifying and addressing needs in their communities. The Data Center offers multiple ways to customize and share information, including a mobile site that you can access on the go.

### Powerful and Easy to Use

With a few keystrokes or clicks of your mouse, you can do the following:

- Rank states, cities, and other geographic areas on key indicators of child well-being
- Generate customized maps and trend lines that show how children are faring and use them in presentations and publications
- Feature automatically updated maps and graphs on your own website or blog
- Access research and recommendations on best practices to improve outcomes for children

### Access Data Anytime, Anywhere at [mobile.kidscount.org](http://mobile.kidscount.org)

You can now access data quickly and easily from a site optimized for your BlackBerry, iPhone, or any smartphone.



[datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)

## Find National, State, and Local Data

Access detailed information for communities across the country. Data are now available for many cities, counties, and school districts.



### Profile for Appling County (Georgia)

Data Provided by: Family Connection Partnership

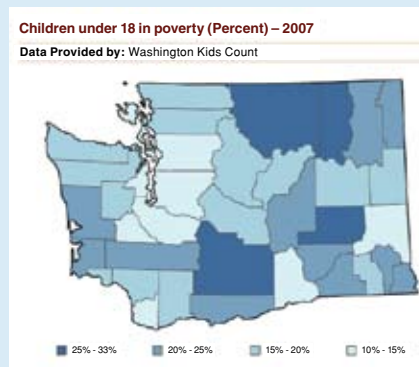
#### Featured Indicators

Low Birthweight (Percent)			
	2004	2005	2006
	9.0%	13.9%	10.4%

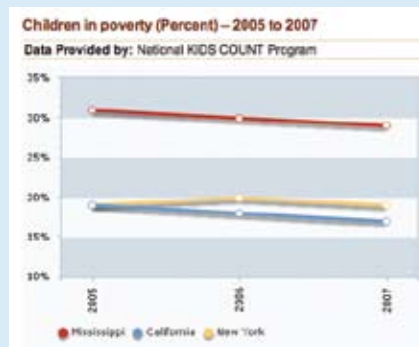
Teen births, ages 15-19 (Number)			
	2004	2005	2006
	43	44	55

## Create Maps and Graphs That Show How Children Are Faring

Customize your own maps to show differences in outcomes for children within or across states.



Create graphs to show change over time.



## Rank Geographic Areas on Child Well-Being

Compare states, cities, and communities on indicators of child well-being.

### Teens who are high school dropouts (Percent) – 2007

Rank		
	United States	7%
1	San Francisco, CA	3%
1	Colorado Springs, CO	3%
3	Virginia Beach, VA	4%

## Customize and Share Information

- Create automatically updated graphs, maps, and charts for your own website or blog
- Share content via Twitter, Facebook, Digg, and other social networking sites
- Add a “widge” to your website or blog that allows visitors to find key data without leaving your site



	Overall Rank based on 10 key indicators	Percent low-birthweight babies: 2006	Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births): 2006	Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14): 2006	Teen death rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19): 2006	Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15–19): 2006	Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16–19): 2007	Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16–19): 2007	Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment: 2007	Percent of children in poverty (income below \$21,027 for a family of two adults and two children): 2007	Percent of children in single-parent families: 2007
		RATE RANK	RATE RANK	RATE RANK	RATE RANK	RATE RANK	RATE RANK	RATE RANK	RATE RANK	RATE RANK	RATE RANK
United States	—	8.3 —	6.7 —	19 —	64 —	42 —	7 —	8 —	33 —	18 —	32 —
Alabama	48	10.5 48	9.0 48	27 43	93 47	54 39	10 46	11 44	37 43	24 45	38 46
Alaska	35	6.0 1	6.9 26	33 50	91 44	44 30	7 23	11 44	39 47	11 4	30 18
Arizona	40	7.1 15	6.4 22	22 34	98 49	62 46	10 46	11 44	33 26	20 37	34 38
Arkansas	47	9.2 41	8.5 46	28 44	98 49	62 46	7 23	11 44	39 47	26 48	35 42
California	20	6.8 6	5.0 3	17 15	60 16	40 23	7 23	8 23	35 38	17 25	31 22
Colorado	22	8.9 36	5.7 13	19 20	64 22	44 30	7 23	7 16	31 14	16 22	28 10
Connecticut	4	8.1 21	6.2 19	9 1	48 5	24 4	4 3	6 7	29 12	11 4	28 10
Delaware	29	9.3 42	8.3 44	13 4	71 28	42 28	9 43	8 23	31 14	15 16	34 38
Dist. of Columbia	N.R.	11.5 N.R.	11.3 N.R.	31 N.R.	84 N.R.	48 N.R.	8 N.R.	11 N.R.	43 N.R.	23 N.R.	60 N.R.
Florida	36	8.7 34	7.3 32	23 39	72 31	45 33	9 43	10 40	32 20	17 25	36 43
Georgia	42	9.6 44	8.1 42	21 26	71 28	54 39	10 46	11 44	33 26	20 37	36 43
Hawaii	18	8.1 21	5.6 10	21 26	57 13	41 27	4 3	9 31	32 20	10 2	28 10
Idaho	26	6.9 8	6.8 25	29 45	67 25	39 21	8 36	8 23	32 20	16 22	22 2
Illinois	24	8.6 32	7.2 31	16 9	60 16	39 21	6 19	8 23	31 14	17 25	31 22
Indiana	31	8.2 24	8.0 40	24 41	69 27	44 30	7 23	8 23	32 20	17 25	32 26
Iowa	6	6.9 8	5.1 4	16 9	58 14	33 13	4 3	6 7	27 4	14 14	27 7
Kansas	13	7.2 17	7.1 29	21 26	63 21	42 28	4 3	6 7	27 4	15 16	27 7
Kentucky	41	9.1 39	7.5 36	21 26	75 32	55 42	8 36	9 31	38 44	24 45	33 31
Louisiana	49	11.4 49	9.9 49	26 42	89 43	54 39	10 46	12 49	40 49	27 49	42 49
Maine	12	6.8 6	6.3 21	16 9	68 26	26 6	5 11	6 7	33 26	15 16	30 18
Maryland	25	9.4 43	7.9 39	18 16	64 22	34 16	7 23	8 23	28 7	10 2	33 31
Massachusetts	5	7.9 19	4.8 2	11 2	35 2	21 2	5 11	6 7	32 20	13 11	29 14
Michigan	27	8.4 29	7.4 33	18 16	55 11	34 16	5 11	7 16	36 41	19 34	32 26
Minnesota	2	6.5 3	5.2 6	16 9	51 7	28 9	3 2	4 1	28 7	12 7	26 5
Mississippi	50	12.4 50	10.6 50	30 47	91 44	68 50	8 36	10 40	43 50	29 50	44 50
N.R.=Not Ranked.											

	Overall Rank based on 10 key indicators	Percent low-birthweight babies: 2006	Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births): 2006	Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14): 2006	Teen death rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19): 2006	Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15–19): 2006	Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16–19): 2007	Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16–19): 2007	Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment: 2007	Percent of children in poverty (income below \$21,027 for a family of two adults and two children): 2007	Percent of children in single-parent families: 2007
		Rate Rank	Rate Rank	Rate Rank	Rate Rank	Rate Rank	Rate Rank	Rate Rank	Rate Rank	Rate Rank	Rate Rank
Missouri	33	8.1 21	7.4 33	21 26	87 41	46 35	7 23	9 31	31 14	18 32	32 26
Montana	30	7.3 18	5.8 14	30 47	84 37	40 23	7 23	10 40	34 33	18 32	26 5
Nebraska	11	7.1 15	5.6 10	19 20	83 35	33 13	4 3	5 3	26 2	15 16	27 7
Nevada	39	8.3 25	6.4 22	21 26	93 47	56 44	11 50	13 50	32 20	15 16	33 31
New Hampshire	1	6.9 8	6.1 17	12 3	38 3	19 1	4 3	5 3	27 4	9 1	25 4
New Jersey	9	8.6 32	5.5 7	13 4	50 6	25 5	5 11	7 16	28 7	12 7	28 10
New Mexico	43	8.9 36	5.8 14	22 34	84 37	64 49	8 36	8 23	38 44	25 47	39 48
New York	17	8.3 25	5.6 10	14 6	43 4	26 6	5 11	7 16	33 26	19 34	34 38
North Carolina	37	9.1 39	8.1 42	21 26	71 28	50 37	8 36	9 31	33 26	20 37	34 38
North Dakota	7	6.7 5	5.8 14	23 39	87 41	27 8	2 1	4 1	28 7	13 11	24 3
Ohio	28	8.8 35	7.8 38	20 24	56 12	40 23	5 11	6 7	34 33	19 34	33 31
Oklahoma	44	8.3 25	8.0 40	29 45	85 40	60 45	8 36	9 31	35 38	22 41	33 31
Oregon	19	6.1 2	5.5 7	20 24	51 7	36 20	7 23	9 31	35 38	17 25	29 14
Pennsylvania	23	8.5 31	7.6 37	18 16	61 20	31 11	6 19	7 16	33 26	16 22	31 22
Rhode Island	15	8.0 20	6.1 17	16 9	34 1	28 9	6 19	6 7	34 33	17 25	33 31
South Carolina	45	10.1 47	8.4 45	22 34	75 32	53 38	9 43	9 31	34 33	21 40	38 46
South Dakota	21	7.0 14	6.9 26	22 34	80 34	40 23	6 19	7 16	26 2	17 25	32 26
Tennessee	46	9.6 44	8.7 47	22 34	91 44	55 42	7 23	9 31	36 41	23 42	36 43
Texas	34	8.4 29	6.2 19	21 26	64 22	63 48	8 36	9 31	33 26	23 42	32 26
Utah	3	6.9 8	5.1 4	19 20	54 9	34 16	5 11	6 7	24 1	11 4	18 1
Vermont	8	6.9 8	5.5 7	18 16	54 9	21 2	4 3	5 3	31 14	12 7	31 22
Virginia	16	8.3 25	7.1 29	16 9	60 16	35 19	5 11	7 16	28 7	13 11	30 18
Washington	14	6.5 3	4.7 1	14 6	60 16	33 13	7 23	8 23	34 33	15 16	29 14
West Virginia	38	9.7 46	7.4 33	19 20	84 37	45 33	7 23	10 40	38 44	23 42	29 14
Wisconsin	10	6.9 8	6.4 22	15 8	59 15	31 11	4 3	5 3	29 12	14 14	30 18
Wyoming	32	8.9 36	7.0 28	31 49	83 35	47 36	7 23	6 7	31 14	12 7	33 31



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