



**COUNTY OFFICIALS' PERCEPTIONS AND USE
OF KIDS COUNT**

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COUNTY OFFICIALS' PERCEPTIONS AND USE OF KIDS COUNT PROGRAMS

Executive Summary

The Annie E. Casey Foundation asked researchers at The Ohio State University to collect information about county government officials' views and use of KIDS COUNT programs. To address this concern, survey questions on KIDS COUNT were included in the County Government Survey. This national survey of county governments was sent to all counties in the 45 contiguous states with functioning county-level governments. A total of 1,543 counties responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 51%.

Researchers at The Ohio State University, in conjunction with the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), conducted the County Government Survey. Survey questions addressing awareness and use of national information sources on child well-being, familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, and the perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs are a component of the survey. The major findings of the study related to the KIDS COUNT component of the survey are summarized below.

KIDS COUNT is a project of The Annie E. Casey Foundation that provides national and state-by-state indicators of child well-being on an annual basis. KIDS COUNT makes information available through the national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. The Foundation also supports state organizations that provide reports using county and other local-level data. Many of the reports from state KIDS COUNT grantees thus focus on counties.

Awareness and Use of KIDS COUNT and other National Information Sources

- Forty-five percent of officials are aware of KIDS COUNT as a source of information on child well-being. A similar percentage of officials are aware of information provided by other non-profit organizations. In contrast, from 79-85% of respondents are aware of federal government information sources.
- Twenty-eight percent of officials say their counties use KIDS COUNT information on child well-being. Information provided by other non-profits is used by between 16% and 25% of counties. In contrast, information from federal government information sources is used by between 61% and 68% of counties.
- For the sample as a whole, the four most commonly used information sources on child well-being are, in descending order: the U.S. Census Bureau; other federal government agencies; the National Association of Counties; and KIDS COUNT.

- Officials of the majority of counties use statistical information on children and families. Officials for only 30% of counties do not use such information.
- Officials most likely to use KIDS COUNT and other national sources of information on child well-being are from metropolitan counties, county governments that are larger and provide more social services, and counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels.

How County Governments Use Statistical Information on Children and Families

- County governments use statistical information on children and families in a variety of ways. The four most common uses are: to write grant proposals (47%), inform themselves about children’s needs (35%), background research on an issue (28%), and to craft legislation, policies, or programs (19%).
- In our sample, among the 382 officials who use KIDS COUNT information, 76% say their counties use statistical information (of all types) to write grant proposals, 70% to inform themselves about children’s needs, 56% to do background research on an issue, and 41% to craft legislation, policies, or programs.
- Officials most likely to use statistical information on children and families for each specific purpose are from metropolitan counties, county governments that are larger and provide more social services, and counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels.

County Officials’ Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*

- Fewer county officials are familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* (24%) than are aware of KIDS COUNT as a source of information on child well-being (46%).
- The four most common ways county officials heard about KIDS COUNT were: receiving the Data Book by mail (36%), from an advocacy group (28%), a state government agency (27%), and a local government agency (24%).
- Officials most likely to be familiar with the *Data Book* are from metropolitan counties, county governments that are larger and provide more social services, and counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels.

The Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs

- Forty-six percent of county government officials who are familiar with the *Data Book* think KIDS COUNT programs have had a major or moderate impact on public awareness of problems facing children and families.

- Thirty-nine percent of county government officials who are familiar with the *Data Book* think KIDS COUNT programs have had a major or moderate impact on public policy in their state.
- Officials more likely to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness and on public policy are from metropolitan counties, county governments that are larger and provide more social services, and counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels.

Introduction

KIDS COUNT is a project of The Annie E. Casey Foundation that provides national and state-by-state indicators of child well-being on an annual basis. KIDS COUNT makes information available through the national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. The Foundation also supports state organizations that provide reports with county and local-level data.

In an effort to understand whether KIDS COUNT information is reaching and influencing county-level government officials, The Annie E. Casey Foundation asked researchers at The Ohio State University to conduct a survey to learn more about how county-level officials use information on the status and well-being of children and how they view KIDS COUNT programs

The five general questions are addressed by this study are as follows:

- What national sources of information on child well-being are county-level government officials aware of and what sources do they actually use?
- For what purposes do county governments use statistical information on children and families?
- Are county officials familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and how did they hear about KIDS COUNT?
- How do county officials perceive the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness of issues facing families and children and on public policy?
- Are there differences among counties in use of national information sources on child well-being, familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, and the perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs?

The Study's Approach and Survey Methodology

To answer the previous questions, survey questions were designed to learn about the information needs of county government officials, whether KIDS COUNT information is reaching these officials, and their perceptions of KIDS COUNT programs. Researchers worked with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to develop the survey protocol. Survey questions concerning KIDS COUNT were developed jointly by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, researchers at the Ohio State University, and researchers at the University of Colorado who conducted a similar survey of state legislators. Appendix A includes the specific survey items concerning KIDS COUNT.

The project was designed to provide a nationally representative view of all U.S. counties. The survey was sent to the 3038 counties in the 45 states of the continental United States where counties are functioning units of government. Questionnaires were sent to a key respondent in each county government. The public official selected to receive the questionnaire was chosen by researchers in consultation with National Association of Counties (NACo) staff. The National Association of Counties (NACo) provided the initial survey mailing list of county officials. The mailing list was updated throughout the survey period to reflect changes due to elections/term expirations and other factors. Updates were made based on new information from county websites and direct telephone calls to officials themselves. Because county governments differ in structure, the position title of respondents varies by county. Forty-four percent of the respondents hold the position of county manager, administrator or executive; another 19% of the respondents hold the position of county commissioner or supervisor. Key respondent characteristics are described in detail in Appendix B.

The study used Dillman's (1978) mail survey methodology. It is the same methodology used in a previous national survey of county government officials conducted by the Ohio State University and Colorado State University in collaboration with the National Association of Counties (NACo) and Rural Policy Initiative (RUPRI).

A total of 1543 counties responded to the survey, representing about a 51% response rate. The distribution of responding counties across urban-rural status, county family poverty level, and median family income level closely corresponds to the distribution of all counties combined (those that responded and those that did not respond). The distribution of responding counties across urban-rural status closely corresponds to the distribution of all counties combined (those that responded and those that did not respond). This is to be expected since the study was designed to be nationally representative. Survey methodology and county characteristics are described in detail in Appendix C.

Why Counties are Important to the Well-Being of Children and Families

County governments are important for understanding and improving child well-being. County governments are increasingly responsible for the delivery of public services, particularly those related to social welfare. The role of county governments in providing local government services is important because counties serve large areas of the United States not served by municipalities or other general-purpose local governments. County governments have grown (employment size) faster than federal, municipal, and township government since the 1980s (Kraybill and Lobao 2001). Because county governments cover unincorporated areas, they are the major provider of public services to many non-metropolitan people. The number of persons residing within counties exceeds the number of residents of municipalities, villages, townships, and other types of all-purpose local government. Moreover, the majority of Americans live in the fifteen states that have devolved welfare responsibilities to county governments. Finally, counties are important units of government in understanding spatial variations in poverty

and socioeconomic well-being. Poverty rates historically have been higher in non-metropolitan areas.

Devolution, a trend in the American system of public administration that shifts responsibility for public services from the federal to state and local levels, has changed the types and level of services that county governments now provide. Devolution makes it critical for counties to have updated information on child well-being. To be eligible for state and federal funds, county governments must increasingly write grant proposals and reports that justify their needs for such funds. Increased accountability of all levels of government to taxpayers also makes it imperative for counties to chart their position and document their successes on social indicators.

Major findings from the survey are reported for the nation as a whole and separately by county characteristics. We find that county government officials' use and perception of KIDS COUNT programs varies depending on differences in county urban-rural status, county government size, level of county government provided social services, and county family poverty and median family income levels.

Summary of Survey Results: The Sample as a Whole

Awareness of KIDS COUNT and other National Information Sources

The first part of the survey was designed to determine which national information sources on the status and well-being of children county officials are aware of and use. This allows us to develop an understanding of where KIDS COUNT falls within the range of available information sources and whether KIDS COUNT data is reaching county-level officials. Table 1 reports county officials' awareness of KIDS COUNT and The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

About 45% of county officials are aware of KIDS COUNT as an information source on child well-being. A similar percentage (47%) of county officials is aware of Children's Defense Fund and National Center for Children in Poverty information sources. The least known information source is Child Trends (34%).

Traditional sources of data are well known to the respondents. Officials of 85% of counties are aware of the Census Bureau and 79% are aware of other federal government information sources. Officials of 78% of counties are aware of NACo as an information source on child well-being.

Use of KIDS COUNT and other National Information Sources

KIDS COUNT information on child well-being is used by officials of about 28% of the counties: 7% use it a lot, 10% use it some, and 10% use it a little. Officials of 18% of counties are aware of KIDS COUNT information, but do not use it (Table 1).

Information provided by The Annie E. Casey Foundation is used by a higher percentage of officials than information provided by other non-profit organizations. National Center for Children in Poverty information is used by officials for 25% of counties and Children's Defense Fund information is used by officials for 24% of the counties. Child Trends information is used by 19% of the counties.

The most commonly used sources of information on child well-being are federal government sources. U.S. Census Bureau information is used by officials for 68% of counties: 17% use it a lot, 36% use it some, and 15% use it a little. Other federal government sources of information are used by officials for 61% of counties and NACo information is used by officials for 56% of counties.

Table 1. County Officials’ Awareness and Use of Information on the Status and Well-Being of Children from Different Information Sources: Total Sample*

Information Source	% total who use**	% use a lot	% use some	% use a little	% aware but don’t use	% aware**	% not aware
The U.S. Census Bureau	68%	17%	36%	15%	17%	85%	15%
Other federal government agencies	61%	12%	35%	14%	18%	79%	21%
National Association of Counties	56%	12%	29%	15%	22%	78%	21%
KIDS COUNT/ Annie E. Casey Foundation	27%	7%	10%	10%	18%	45%	54%
National Center for Children in Poverty	25%	2%	11%	12%	22%	47%	53%
Children’s Defense Fund	24%	3%	10%	11%	23%	47%	53%
Child Trends	19%	2%	8%	9%	15%	34%	66%

*N=1543. Percentages do not all sum to 100% due to rounding errors.

** Percentage who use is the sum of those who use the source a lot, some and a little. The percentage aware is the sum of those who use, and those who are aware but do not use the information source.

How County Governments Use Statistical Information on Children and Families

The survey asked county officials how their governments use statistical information on children and families, regardless of the information source. Officials for a majority of the counties report their governments use statistical information in a variety of ways. Only 30% of the counties do not use statistical information (see Table 2).

County officials report their governments most often use statistical information to write grant proposals (47%), followed by informing themselves about children’s needs (35%), and doing background research on an issue (28%). The relatively high use of information for these purposes probably reflects the increased responsibility of county-level governments for funding and administering social programs directly affecting the well-being of children and families.

Nearly 20% of county governments use statistical information to craft legislation, programs and policies (19%), to check or confirm other data sources (17%), in committees and deliberations (17%), and in speeches (17%). County governments also use statistical information to hold state agencies accountable (13%).

TABLE 2. How County Governments Use of Statistical Information on Children and Families: Percentage by Total Sample*

How county governments use statistical information on children and families	% of total sample using
To write grant proposals	47%
To inform ourselves about children’s need	35%
To do background research on an issue	28%
To craft legislation, policies or programs	19%
To check or confirm other data sources	17%
In committee or council deliberations	17%
In speeches	17%
To hold state agencies accountable	13%
Other uses	9%
County does not use statistical information	30%

N=1543

The survey did not specifically ask about how KIDS COUNT information is used. Rather the survey asked about how statistical information is used, regardless of source. Nevertheless, Table 3 provides information for the 382 county officials who report using KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation information and who also provided information of how their county governments use statistical information.

Among officials using KIDS COUNT information, 76% report that their government uses statistical information to write grant proposals, 70% to inform themselves about children’s needs, and 56% to do background research on an issue. Among officials using KIDS COUNT information, 41% report that their government uses statistical information to craft legislation, policies or programs, 39% in committee or council deliberations, 37% to check or confirm other data sources, and 37% in speeches. Among officials using KIDS COUNT information, 25% report that their government uses statistical information to hold state agencies accountable (Table 3).

Table 3. County Use of Statistical Information on the Status and Well-Being of Children Reported by Officials who use KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation

How county governments use statistical information on children and families	% of officials using KIDS COUNT that use statistical information in this way*
To write grant proposals	76%
To inform ourselves about children’s need	70%
To do background research on an issue	56%
To craft legislation, policies or programs	41%
To check or confirm other data sources	37%
In committee or council deliberations	39%
In speeches	37%
To hold state agencies accountable	25%
Other uses	18%

*Percentages are based on 382 officials using KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation statistical information.

County Officials’ Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*

When asked specifically about the national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, officials of 24% of counties say they are familiar with the *Data Book*. Fewer officials are familiar with the *Data Book* (24%) than are aware of KIDS COUNT/ Annie E. Casey Foundation as a national source of information on the status and well-being of children and families (45%), as noted in the discussion of Table 1. They may have become aware of KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation through news coverage, reports, or the website.

The limited reach of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is of concern because of the increased responsibility of county governments for programs and policies that affect child well-being. The next section describes the variety of ways county government officials who are familiar with the *Data Book* heard about KIDS COUNT. (The Summary of Survey Results: County Differences section of this report discusses in greater detail the types of counties KIDS COUNT information is reaching and influencing.)

How County Officials Heard about KIDS COUNT

Only those officials who are familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* (n=349) were asked to provide information about how they heard about KIDS COUNT. For the sample as a whole, the four most common ways in which officials heard about the KIDS COUNT were, in descending order: receiving the *Data Book* in the mail, from an advocacy group, from a state government agency, and from a local government agency (see Table 4).

Mailing is the most effective way of getting the *Data Book* to county government officials, 36% reported receiving the *Data Book* by mail. Advocacy groups, state government agencies and local government agencies are moderately effective channels for informing county government officials about KIDS COUNT. Twenty-eight percent

of officials heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group, 27% from a state government agency, and 24% from a local government agency. Seventeen percent heard about KIDS COUNT from a service provider.

Media is a less effective way of introducing KIDS COUNT to county government officials. Seventeen percent of officials heard about it from a newsletter or other publication, 16% through the Internet, 15% from newspapers and 10% through radio or television. The least common ways in which county government officials heard about KIDS COUNT were by receiving the *Data Book* in person (10%), followed by hearing about KIDS COUNT from a constituent or local elected official (7%), a state legislator (5%) and a state legislative staff member (3%).

Table 4. How County Officials Heard about KIDS COUNT*

How officials heard about KIDS COUNT	% of those familiar naming each source
Received the Data Book in the mail	36%
From an advocacy group	28%
From a state government agency	27%
From a local government agency	24%
From a service provider	17%
In a newsletter or other publication	17%
On the Internet	16%
In the newspaper	15%
On radio or television	10%
Given the Data Book in person	10%
From a constituent	7%
From a local elected official	7%
From a state legislator	5%
From state legislative staff	3%

*Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents could hear about KIDS COUNT in multiple ways. Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=349)

Getting the *Data Book* to county officials by mail will require a carefully updated mailing list. Because advocacy groups are moderately effective in introducing KIDS COUNT to county government officials it may be possible to encourage Annie E. Casey Foundation state-affiliates to direct their efforts toward county-level officials. Since state and local government agencies are moderately effective channels for informing county officials about KIDS COUNT, it may be possible to disseminate this information through state-level and county-level Extension Service programs. The Extension Service is well known to and used by rural county governments. It may also be possible to distribute information on KIDS COUNT through the state-level associations of county officials that exist in most states.

Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs

Impact on Public Awareness of Problems Faced by Children and Families

Of the 349 officials familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, 46% think KIDS COUNT programs have had a major or moderate impact on public awareness of problems faced by children and families (see Table 5). Fewer officials (22%) report a minor impact and very few (2%) report no impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness.

Table 5. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Awareness of Problems faced by Children and Families.

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC AWARENESS	% of those familiar*
Major impact	8%
Moderate impact	38%
Minor impact	22%
No impact	2%
Can't say	30%

*Percentages are based on the officials familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=339).

Impact on Public Policy in their State

Of the 349 officials familiar with the *Data Book*, 39% think KIDS COUNT programs have had a major or moderate impact public policy in their state. Fewer officials (27%) report a minor impact and very few (3%) report no impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy (Table 6).

Table 6. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Policy in their State.

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC POLICY	% of those familiar*
Major impact	5%
Moderate impact	34%
Minor impact	27%
No impact	3%
Can't say	32%

*Percentages are based on the officials familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=340).

Summary of Survey Results: County Differences

To understand the types of counties KIDS COUNT information is reaching and influencing the major findings from the survey are reported in relation to county characteristics. These characteristics are: county urban-rural status; county government size; county government social service provision level; and county family poverty and median family income level. County government officials' use and perception of KIDS COUNT programs varies depending on differences in these five county characteristics.

County Rural-Urban Status

Counties are grouped into three urban-rural status categories: metropolitan; adjacent; and remote rural counties. Metropolitan counties contain or are located within regions that have large urban cores. Adjacent counties are non-metropolitan counties located next to metropolitan counties. Rural counties are non-metropolitan counties that are not adjacent to metropolitan counties and have relatively small or no urban population. These categories, developed by the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are based on the 2000 Census of Population. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determined metropolitan status. For the sample as a whole, 35% of the counties are metropolitan, 26% are adjacent, and 39% are rural (see Table C1 in Appendix C).

County Government Size

County governments are grouped into three employment-size categories based on the sample distribution of 33% small, 33% medium, and 33% large county governments. Small size county governments have between 1 and 91 full-time employees, medium size county governments have between 92 and 265 full-time employees, and large size county governments have more than 265 full-time employees.

County Government Social Service Level

County governments provide a wide variety of public services that they operate directly and in cooperation with other governments. Twelve of the public services that may be provided are considered social services that directly affect the well-being of children and families. These social services are: childcare/Head Start programs; food pantries; nutrition programs; health clinics; hospitals; mental health services; drug/alcohol rehabilitation; family planning/reproductive health services; homeless shelters; housing assistance; and public housing.

Counties are categorized into three levels of county government social service provision based on the sample distribution of 31% low, 38% medium, and 31% high social service level county governments. Levels of county government social service provision are defined as low (provide 0-1 social services out of 12), medium (2-4 social services out of 12), and high (5 or more social services out of 12).

County Family Poverty Level

Counties are categorized into three levels of family poverty based on the sample distribution of 33% low, 33% medium, and 33% high family poverty level counties. Counties with a family poverty rate of 7% or below are defined as low, those with a rate between 7% and 11% are defined as medium, and those with a rate greater than 11% are defined as high family poverty level counties (see Table C2 in Appendix C). Family poverty rates are based on the 2000 Census of Population.

County Median Family Income Level

Counties are categorized into three median family income levels based on the sample distribution of 33% low, 33% medium, and 33% high median family income level counties. Counties with a median family income of \$37,827 or below are defined as low, those between \$37,828 and \$44,790 are defined as medium, and those greater than \$44,790 are defined as high median family income level counties (see Table C3 in Appendix C). Median family income is based on the 2000 Census of Population.

Use of KIDS COUNT and other National Information Sources

Officials of metropolitan counties, county governments that are larger and provide more social services, and counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels are more likely to use KIDS COUNT and other national sources of information on child well-being than officials of other types of counties. Appendix D describes these variations in more detail.

Officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties to use KIDS COUNT information on child well-being. Specifically, officials of 34% of metropolitan, 25% of adjacent, and 21% of rural counties use KIDS COUNT information. Officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to use KIDS COUNT information: officials for 17% of small; 23% of medium; and 43% of large county governments use KIDS COUNT information. Officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of county governments that provide fewer social services to use KIDS COUNT information: officials of 15% of low; 25% of medium; and 43% of high social service level county governments use KIDS COUNT information. Finally, the use of KIDS COUNT information increases with decreasing county levels family poverty and increasing county levels of median family income. Officials of 21% of high, 28% of medium, and 35% of low family poverty level counties use KIDS COUNT information. Officials of 20% of low, 22% of medium, and 40% of high median family income level counties use KIDS COUNT information (see Tables D1-5 in Appendix D).

Across all information sources on child well-being, officials of a higher percentage of metropolitan than adjacent and a higher percentage of adjacent than rural counties use statistical information. In addition, across all information sources, the larger

the county government and the more social services provided by the county government, the more likely its officials are to use statistical information. Officials of county governments that provide more social services are reasonably expected to have a greater knowledge of and professional interest in information on the well-being of children and families. Finally, across all information sources, statistical information use generally increases with a decreasing county level of family poverty and an increasing county level of median family income (see Tables D1-5 in Appendix D).

How County Governments Use Statistical Information on Children and Families

For the sample as a whole, the four most common uses of statistical information on children and families are: to write grant proposals (47%); inform themselves about children's needs (35%); background research on an issue (28%); and to craft legislation, policies or programs (19%). However, the percentage of counties using statistical information for these purposes differs depending on county urban-rural status, county government size and level of social service provision, and county levels of family poverty and median family income. Appendix E describes these variations in more detail.

Metropolitan county governments are more likely than non-metropolitan county governments to use statistical information for each specific purpose. For example, 55% of metropolitan, 47% of adjacent, and 40% of rural counties use statistical information to write grant proposals. Similarly, 28% of metropolitan and 19% of adjacent, but only 11% of rural counties use statistical information to craft legislation, policies or programs (see Table E1 in Appendix E).

Larger county governments and county governments that provide more social services are more likely than smaller county governments and county governments that provide fewer social services to use statistical information for each specific purpose. For example, 30% of small, 46% of medium, and 64% of large county governments use statistical information to write grant proposals. Similarly, 30% of low, 45% of medium, and 66% of high social service level county governments use statistical information to write grant proposals (see Tables E2-3 in Appendix E).

Counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels are more likely than counties with higher family poverty and lower median family income to use statistical information for each specific purpose. For example, 44% of high, 46% of medium, and 50% of low family poverty level counties use statistical information to write grant proposals. Forty-one percent of low, 43% of medium, and 56% of high median family income counties use statistical information to write grant proposals (see Tables E4-5 in Appendix E).

County Officials' Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*

Officials most likely to be familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* are from metropolitan counties, county governments that are larger and provide more social services, and counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income.

Appendix 6 describes these variations in more detail. Officials of a higher percentage of metropolitan than non-metropolitan counties are familiar with the *Data Book*. Specifically, officials of 32% of metropolitan, 19% of adjacent, and 19% of rural counties are familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* (see Table F1 in Appendix F).

County officials' familiarity with the *Data Book* increases with increasing county government size and with increasing county government social service provision levels. Officials of 14% of small, 20% of medium, and 37% of large county governments are familiar with the *Data Book*. Similarly, officials of 14% of low, 22% of medium, and 35% of high social service level county governments are familiar with the *Data Book* (see Tables F2-3 in Appendix F).

County officials' familiarity with the *Data Book* increases with decreasing county family poverty and increasing county median family income levels. Officials of 16% of high, 23% of medium, and 31% of low family poverty level counties are familiar with the *Data Book*. Officials of 16% of low, 18% of medium, and 37% of high median family income level counties are familiar with the *Data Book* (see Tables F4-5 in Appendix F).

Conversely, officials least likely to be familiar with the *Data Book* are from non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties, county governments that are smaller and provide fewer social services, and counties with higher family poverty and lower median family income. These findings suggest that officials of county governments with a lower capacity to implement programs affecting child well-being and a greater need to address child-well being are less likely to be familiar with the *Data Book*. Non-metropolitan counties tend to have smaller county governments, provide fewer social services and have historically experienced higher rates of family poverty than metropolitan counties. In addition, non-metropolitan county governments (especially rural) are more likely than metropolitan county governments to report fiscal stress problems due to reduced federal and state revenues, declining local tax base, pressures from citizens to reduce taxes, and mandates from higher levels of government. Finally, non-metropolitan county governments are less likely compared to metropolitan county governments to have the capacity to seek external funds because they are less likely to employ a grant writer or an economic development professional (Kraybill and Lobao 2001).

How County Officials' Heard about KIDS COUNT

For the sample as a whole, the four most common ways county officials heard about KIDS COUNT were: receiving the *Data Book* in the mail (36%); followed by hearing about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group (28%); a state government agency (27%); and a local government agency (24%). Yet, how county government officials heard about KIDS COUNT varies with differences in county urban-rural status, county government size, level of county government social service provision, and county family poverty and median family income levels. Appendix G provides greater detail as to these differences. These findings suggest that strategies for disseminating information on KIDS COUNT could be more effective if they were tailored to reach specific types of counties.

Mailing is the most common way in which officials heard about KIDS COUNT across all types of counties. However, officials of metropolitan and adjacent counties are more likely than officials of rural counties to have received the *Data Book* in the mail (see Table G1 in Appendix G). Officials of larger county governments and county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of smaller county governments and county governments that provide fewer social services to have received the *Data Book* in the mail (see Tables G2-3 in Appendix G). Finally, officials of lower family poverty level and higher median family income counties are generally more likely than officials of higher family poverty and lower median family income counties to have received the *Data Book* in the mail (see Tables G4-5 in Appendix G). Mailings of the *Data Book* have not reached a large percentage of county officials of smaller, non-metropolitan, poorer counties.

Advocacy groups are a moderately effective at introducing county government officials to KIDS COUNT across all county types. However, officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group. In addition, officials of rural counties are more likely than officials of adjacent counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group (see Table G1 in Appendix G). Officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county government to have heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group. Similarly, officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of large county governments to have heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group (see Tables G2-3 in Appendix G). Finally, officials of counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels are more likely than officials of higher family poverty and lower median family income counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from advocacy groups (see Tables G4-5 in Appendix G). Advocacy group efforts to disseminate information on KIDS COUNT programs have not reached a large percentage of non-metropolitan, poorer counties, or county governments that are smaller and provide fewer social services.

State and local government agencies are also moderately effective at introducing county government officials to KIDS COUNT across all county types. However, officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties are more likely than officials of metropolitan counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a state government agency. In contrast, officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a local government agency (see Table G1 in Appendix G). Officials of smaller county governments are more likely than officials of larger county governments to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a state government agency. In contrast, officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a local government agency (see Tables G2-3 in Appendix G). These findings suggest that communication patterns between county officials and state and local government agencies differ between larger, metropolitan counties and smaller, non-metropolitan counties. By implication both state and local government agencies should be considered important channels of communication in efforts to disseminate information on KIDS COUNT to county officials.

Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs

Impact on Public Awareness of Problems facing Children and Families

Officials who are more likely to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness of problems faced by children and families are from metropolitan counties, county governments that are larger and provide more social services, and from counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income. That is, a higher percentage of officials of these types of counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness as major or moderate. Appendix H discusses these variations in more detail.

Officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness. Specifically, a higher percentage of officials of metropolitan (54%) than adjacent (40%) or rural (38%) counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness as major or moderate (see Table H1 in Appendix H).

Officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness. Similarly, officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of county governments that provide fewer social services to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness. The perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness increases with increasing county government size and increasing levels of county government provided social services (see Tables H2-3 in Appendix H).

Officials of counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels are more likely than officials of counties with higher family poverty and lower median family income levels to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness. The perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness increases with decreasing county family poverty and increasing county median family income (see Tables H4-5 in Appendix H).

Impact on Public Policy in their State

Officials who are more likely to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy in their state are from metropolitan counties, county governments that are larger and provide more social services, and counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income. That is, a higher percentage of officials of these types of counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy as major or moderate. Appendix H discusses these variations in more detail.

Officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy in their state. That is, a higher percentage of officials of metropolitan (46%) than adjacent (40%) and rural (26%) counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy as major or moderate (see Table H6 in Appendix H).

Officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy in their state. Similarly, officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of county governments that provide fewer social services to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy. The perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy increases with increasing county government size and with increasing county government social service provision (see Tables H7-8 in Appendix H).

Officials of counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income levels are more likely than officials of counties with higher family poverty and lower median family income levels to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy. The perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy increases with decreasing county family poverty and increasing county median family income (see Tables H9-10 in Appendix H)

Conclusions

This report highlights the results from a national survey of county governments. Data collection began in January 2004 and was completed in March 2005. This report, based on the full set of respondents, summarizes our results from 51% of the full population of the 45 contiguous U.S. states with functioning county-level governments.

We found that 45% of county officials are aware of KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation as a source of information on child well-being, but that fewer (28%) say their counties use KIDS COUNT information and, even fewer (24%) are familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. Perhaps of equal significance, awareness of KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation, use of KIDS COUNT information, familiarity with the *Data Book*, and the perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs varied with differences in county characteristics. KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation has been more successful at reaching and influencing officials of metropolitan counties, larger county governments that provide more social services, and counties with lower family poverty and higher median family income than other types of counties and county governments.

While more than three-quarters of county officials responding to the survey are aware of information from federal agencies, less than half are aware of data sources from nonprofit organizations, including The Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT. Given the complexity in using federally provided data sources particularly for end-users with limited computer skills, it seems that many counties are missing out on KIDS COUNT, a relatively easily accessible source of data.

The major ways county officials heard about KIDS COUNT were by receiving the *Data Book* by mail (36%), followed by hearing about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group (28%), a state government agency (27%), and a local government agency (24%). Mass mailings to county officials would thus be an important way to reach county officials. Since non-metro counties (both adjacent and rural) are much less likely than metro counties to be familiar with the *Data Book*, one strategy of dissemination may be to rely on mailings to Extension Service personnel. These personnel (funded by a combination of federal, state, and county government sources) assist local officials in economic development and social service capacities. In this way, both Extension Service personnel and county officials could be made better aware of the data tools provided by KIDS COUNT.

References

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APPENDIX A
The KIDS COUNT component of the Survey Instrument

(Item numbering corresponds to that in the survey instrument.)

193. Listed below are some national organizations that compile and disseminate statistical information on children and families. Please tell us how much you use each of these organizations to obtain information on the status and well being of children. (The response categories for this question are: 1. use a little, 2. use some, 3. use a lot, 4. aware but haven't used, 5. not aware.)

1. The U.S. Census Bureau
2. Other federal government agencies
3. National Association of Counties
4. National Center for Children in Poverty
5. Child Trends
6. Children's Defense Fund
7. KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation

194. In what ways does your county government use statistical information on children and families? (Please mark X in all boxes that apply.)

1. To write grant proposals
2. To craft legislation, policies or programs
3. In committee or council deliberations
4. In speeches
5. To do background research on an issue
6. To inform ourselves about children's needs
7. To check or confirm other data sources
8. To hold state agencies accountable
9. Other uses
10. County does not use statistical data on children and families

KIDS COUNT is a project of The Annie E. Casey Foundation that provides national and state-by-state indicators of child well-being on an annual basis. KIDS COUNT makes information available through the national KIDS COUNT Data Book. In addition, the Foundation supports state organizations that provide reports with county and local-level data.

195. Are you familiar with the national KIDS COUNT Data Book?

(The response categories for this question are 1. yes and 2. no. If no, the respondent is asked to skip the remaining questions).

196. How have you heard about KIDS COUNT?

(Please mark X in all boxes that apply.)

1. A constituent
2. A state legislator
3. A state legislative staffer
4. A state government agency
5. A local elected official
6. A local government agency
7. An advocacy group
8. A service provider
9. On radio or television
10. In the newspaper
11. A newsletter or other publication
12. The Internet
13. Received the Data Book in the mail
14. Given the Data Book in person

197. Thinking about all aspects of the KIDS COUNT programs, what impact, if any, do you think KIDS COUNT has had on public awareness of problems faced by children and families in your state?

1. A major impact
2. A moderate impact
3. A minor impact
4. No impact
5. Can't say

198. Thinking about all aspects of the KIDS COUNT programs, what impact, if any, do you think KIDS COUNT has had on public policy in your state?

1. A major impact
2. A moderate impact
3. A minor impact
4. No impact
5. Can't say

APPENDIX B

Key Respondent Characteristics

About half (52%), of the key respondents hold elected positions while somewhat less than half (48%) hold appointed positions in county government. The most common position of respondents is county manager, administrator or executive. Forty-four percent of the respondents hold such a position. Nineteen percent of the respondents hold the position of county commissioner or supervisor, 17% of respondents hold the position of county clerk, 12% of the respondents are auditors, and the remaining 8% are other officials such as economic development specialists.

The most frequently reported level of education for all respondents is some college or junior college. Notably, county officials' educational attainments differ between metro and non-metro areas. In metropolitan counties, the most frequent education level reported is a graduate or professional degree (43%). In contrast, some college or junior college is the most frequent education level for respondents in adjacent (31%) and rural (36%) counties.

Twenty-three percent of respondents have been employed in county government for 20 or more years, 29% for 10 to 19 years, 25% for five to ten years, and 23% for less than five years. Thirty percent of the respondents are age 35-49. More than half (55%) of the respondents are age 50-64. The percent of respondents who are men is 63%. The percentage of male respondents is 71% in metropolitan counties, 68% in adjacent counties, and 52% in rural counties.

Appendix C

Description of the Survey Methods

Survey Period

Questionnaires were mailed beginning in January of 2004 to approximately 3000 counties in the 45 contiguous states of the U. S. that have functioning county governments. The three continental states that do not have functioning county governments are Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

Key Respondents

Questionnaires were sent to a key respondent in each county government. The public office selected to receive the questionnaire varied by state, and was chosen by the researchers in consultation with NACo staff. NACo provided the survey mailing list.

Survey Response Rate by County Characteristics

A total of 1543 counties responded to the survey, representing about a 51% response rate.

County Urban-Rural Status

Counties were classified into three urban-rural continuum categories based on the 2000 Census of Population: metropolitan counties; non-metropolitan counties adjacent to metropolitan counties (termed “adjacent counties” here); and non-metropolitan counties that are non-adjacent to metropolitan counties (termed “rural counties” here). Counties were assigned to metropolitan, adjacent and rural categories based on the rural-urban continuum codes, developed by the Economic Research Service.

Metropolitan counties are those coded 0-3:

- 0=central counties of metropolitan areas of 1 million population or more
- 1= fringe counties of metropolitan areas of 1 million population or more
- 2=counties in metropolitan areas of 250 thousand to 1 million population
- 3=counties in metropolitan areas of less than 250 thousand population).

Non-metropolitan counties are those coded 4-9:

- 4=urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 5=urban population of 20, 000 or more, not adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 6=urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 7=urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 8=completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 9=completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to a metropolitan

Adjacent counties are defined to include codes 4 and 6. Adjacency is determined by physical boundary adjacency and commuting flows. Rural counties are defined to include codes 5, 7, 8, and 9. County codes were prepared in the Rural Economy division, Economic Research Service, USDA (<http://www.ers.usda.gov>). The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determined metropolitan status. The Economic Research Service now provides both 10 and 13 category codes of county urban-rural status for the 2000 Census of Population. To be consistent with results of our previous study we used the 10 category codes to delimit county urban-rural status.

Thirty-five percent of all responding counties are metropolitan, 26% are adjacent, and 39% are rural. The total number of responding counties is 1543. The distribution of responding counties across urban-rural categories (metropolitan, adjacent, rural) is approximately the same as the distribution of all counties combined (both those that responded and those that did not respond) (Table C1).

Table C1. Distribution of Counties by Urban-Rural Status: Sample and National Population

	% Metro Counties	% Adjacent Counties	% Rural Counties	Total Number of Counties
Sample	35%	26%	39%	1543
National Population	34%	27%	39%	3038
Difference	1%	1%	1%	1495

County Family Poverty Level

Counties are categorized into three levels of family poverty. Counties with a family poverty rate of 7% or below are defined as low, those between 7% and 11% are defined as medium, and those greater than 11% are defined as high family poverty level counties. Family poverty rates are based on the 2000 Census of Population.

Responding counties were categorized into three groups of equal size based on the county level of family poverty. Thirty-three percent of all responding counties are low, 33% are medium, and 33% are high family poverty level counties. The distribution of all counties combined (both those that responded and those that did not respond) is 29% low, 34% medium, and 38% high family poverty level counties. The sample includes a somewhat higher percentage of low family poverty level counties and a somewhat lower percentage of high family poverty level counties than the total population (Table C2).

Table C2. Distribution of Counties by Family Poverty Level: Sample and National Population

	% Low Family Poverty Counties	% Medium Family Poverty Counties	% High Family Poverty Counties	Total Number of Counties
Sample	33%	33%	33%	1543
National Population	29%	33%	37%	3038
Difference	4%	0%	4%	1495

County Median Family Income Level

Counties are categorized into three median family income levels. Counties with a median family income level of \$37,827 or below are defined as low, those between \$37,828 and \$44,790 are defined as medium, and those greater than \$44,790 are defined as high median family income level counties. Median family income is based on the 2000 Census of Population.

Responding counties were categorized into three groups of equal size based on the county level of median family income. Thirty-three percent of all responding counties are low, 33% are medium, and 33% are high median family income level counties. The distribution of all counties combined (both those that responded and those that did not respond) is 37% low, 33% medium, and 31% high median family income level counties. The sample includes a somewhat lower percentage of low median family income level counties and a somewhat higher percentage of high median family income level counties than the total population (Table C3).

Table C3. Distribution of Counties by Median Family Income Level: Sample and National Population

	% Low Median Family Income Counties	% Medium Median Family Income Counties	% High Median Family Income Counties	Total Number of Counties
Sample	33%	33%	33%	1543
National Population	37%	33%	31%	3038
Difference	4%	0%	2%	1495

Appendix D
Use of KIDS COUNT and other National Information Sources

Officials of metropolitan, adjacent, and rural counties differ considerably in the use of statistical information on the status and well-being of children. Across all information sources, a higher percentage of metropolitan than adjacent and a higher percentage of adjacent than rural counties use statistical information (Table D1).

Officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of adjacent and rural counties to use KIDS COUNT information. Specifically, officials of 34% of metropolitan, 25% of adjacent, and 21% of rural counties use KIDS COUNT information.

Table D1. Use of Information on the Status and Well-Being of Children from Different Information Sources: Percentage Reporting Use by County Urban-Rural Status*

Information Source	% Metro Counties	% Adjacent Counties	% Rural Counties
The U.S. Census Bureau	75%	69%	62%
Other federal government agencies	70%	61%	53%
National Association of Counties	62%	55%	51%
KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation	37%	25%	21%
National Center for Children in Poverty	34%	25%	18%
Children’s Defense Fund	31%	22%	19%
Child Trends	23%	18%	15%

The use of statistical information varies by the county government size. Officials of larger county governments are more likely to use statistical information than officials of smaller county governments. Across all information sources, the use of statistical information increases with increasing county government size (Tables D2).

Officials of larger county governments are more likely to use KIDS COUNT information than officials of smaller county governments. Specifically, officials of 17% of small, 23% of medium, and 43% of large county governments use KIDS COUNT information.

Table D2. Use of Information on the Status and Well-Being of Children from Different Information Sources: Percentage Reporting Use by County Government Size

Information Source	% Small Governments	% Medium Governments	% Large Governments
The U.S. Census Bureau	56%	68%	80%
Other federal government agencies	49%	59%	75%
National Association of Counties	45%	58%	65%
KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation	17%	23%	43%
National Center for Children in Poverty	13%	23%	40%
Children’s Defense Fund	13%	21%	38%
Child Trends	11%	16%	29%

The use of statistical information differs by the level of county government provided social services. Officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely to use statistical information than officials of county governments that provide fewer social services. Across all sources of information, the percentage of counties that use statistical information increases with an increasing level of county government social services (Table D3).

The use of KIDS COUNT information by county officials increases with an increasing level of county government provided social services. That is, the more social services the county government provides, the more likely county officials are to use KIDS COUNT information. Officials of 15% of low, 25% of medium, and 42% of high social service level county governments use KIDS COUNT information.

Table D3. Use of Information on the Status and Well-Being of Children from Different Information Sources: Percentage Reporting Use by County Government Social Service Level

Information Source	% Low Social Service	% Medium Social Service	% High Social Service
The U.S. Census Bureau	56%	65%	83%
Other federal government agencies	46%	58%	78%
National Association of Counties	45%	51%	70%
KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation	15%	25%	42%
National Center for Children in Poverty	16%	20%	40%
Children’s Defense Fund	13%	20%	38%
Child Trends	10%	15%	30%

Officials' use of statistical information differs by county family poverty level. In general, statistical information use increases with a decreasing county family poverty. Officials of counties with lower family poverty levels are more likely to use statistical information than officials of counties with higher family poverty levels (Table D4).

The use of KIDS COUNT information increases with a decrease in county family poverty level. Officials of 21% of high, 28% of medium, and 35% of low family poverty level counties use KIDS COUNT information.

Table D4. Use of Information on the Status and Well-Being of Children from Different Information Sources: Percentage Reporting Use by County Family Poverty Level

Information Source	% Low Poverty	% Medium Poverty	% High Poverty
The U.S. Census Bureau	71%	65%	67%
Other federal government agencies	64%	60%	57%
National Association of Counties	58%	56%	53%
KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation	35%	28%	21%
National Center for Children in Poverty	32%	24%	21%
Children's Defense Fund	30%	22%	21%
Child Trends	22%	19%	16%

The use of statistical information differs by county median family income level. Officials of counties with higher median family income levels are more likely to use statistical information than officials of counties with lower median family income levels. In general, the use of information increases with increasing county median family income level (Table D5).

The use of KIDS COUNT information increases with an increasing level of county median family income. Officials of 20% of low, 22% of medium, and 40% of high median family income level counties use KIDS COUNT information.

Table D5. Use of Information on the Status and Well-Being of Children from Different Information Sources: Percentage Reporting Use by County Median Family Income Level

Information Source	% Low Income	% Medium Income	% High Income
The U.S. Census Bureau	64%	63%	78%
Other federal government agencies	54%	59%	70%
National Association of Counties	50%	54%	61%
KIDS COUNT/Annie E. Casey Foundation	20%	22%	40%
National Center for Children in Poverty	19%	22%	36%
Children's Defense Fund	19%	20%	33%
Child Trends	16%	15%	25%

Appendix E
How County Governments Use Statistical Information on Children and Families

Use of statistical information on children and families varies considerably by county urban-rural status. Metropolitan counties are more likely than adjacent and rural counties to use statistical information for each specific purpose. Across county-urban statuses, the three most common uses of statistical information, in descending order are: grant writing; to inform themselves about children’s needs; and background research on an issue. For example, 28% of metropolitan and 19% of adjacent, but only 11% of rural counties use statistical information on children and families to craft legislation, policies and programs (Table E1).

TABLE E1. County Government Use of Statistical Information on Children and Families: Percentage Reporting Use by Total Sample and County Urban-Rural Status*

How county governments use statistical information on children and families	% Total Sample	% Metro Counties	% Adjacent Counties	% Rural Counties
To write grant proposals	47%	55%	47%	40%
To inform ourselves about children’s need	35%	45%	34%	28%
To do background research on an issue	28%	39%	26%	18%
To craft legislation, policies or programs	19%	28%	19%	11%
To check or confirm other data sources	17%	23%	16%	13%
In committee or council deliberations	17%	24%	13%	13%
In speeches	17%	26%	16%	9%
To hold state agencies accountable	13%	15%	14%	11%
Other uses	9%	12%	10%	7%
County does not use statistical information	30%	22%	31%	38%

*N=1543

How statistical information on children and families is used differs with county government size. Larger county governments are more likely than smaller county governments to use statistical information for each specific use. For example, 30% of small, 46% of medium, and 64% of large county governments use statistical information to write grant proposals (Table E2).

Table E2. County Government Use of Statistical Information on Children and Families: Percentage Reporting Use by Total Sample and County Government Size*

How county governments use statistical information on Children and families	% Total Sample	% Small Governments	% Medium Governments	% Large Governments
To write grant proposals	47%	30%	46%	64%
To inform ourselves about children's need	36%	20%	33%	54%
To do background research on an issue	28%	14%	25%	46%
To craft legislation, policies or programs	19%	8%	15%	34%
To check or confirm other data sources	18%	9%	16%	30%
In committee or council deliberations	17%	8%	14%	29%
In speeches	17%	6%	12%	34%
To hold state agencies accountable	14%	8%	14%	18%
Other uses	10%	6%	8%	15%
County does not use statistical information	31%	47%	29%	16%

*N=1402

The use of statistical information varies with the level of social services provided by county government. Across all specific uses of statistical information, the use of statistical information increases with an increase in the level of social services provided by county government. That is, the more social services the county government provides, the more likely its officials are to use statistical information for various purposes. For example, 30% of low, 45% of medium, and 66% of high social service level counties use statistical information to write grant proposals (Table E3).

Table E3. County Government Use of Statistical Information on Children and Families: Percentage Reporting Use by Total Sample and County Government Social Service Level*

How county governments use statistical information on children and families	% Total Sample	% Low Social Service	% Medium Social Service	% High Social Service
To write grant proposals	47%	30%	45%	66%
To inform ourselves about children's need	35%	18%	32%	57%
To do background research on an issue	28%	14%	25%	44%
To craft legislation, policies or programs	19%	8%	14%	36%
To check or confirm other data sources	17%	9%	14%	30%
In committee or council deliberations	17%	5%	15%	30%
In speeches	17%	8%	14%	29%
To hold state agencies accountable	13%	5%	13%	21%
Other uses	9%	7%	7%	14%
County does not use statistical information	30%	45%	32%	14%

*N=1543

The use of statistical information on children and families differs with county family poverty level. Counties with lower family poverty are more likely than counties with higher family poverty to use statistical information for each specific purpose. Across all specific uses of statistical information, the percentage of counties that use statistical information decreases with an increasing county family poverty level. That is, the lower the county family poverty level, the more likely its officials are to use statistical information for each specific purpose (Table E4).

Table E4. County Government Use of Statistical Information on Children and Families: Percentage Reporting Use by Total Sample and County Family Poverty Level*

How county governments use statistical information on children and families	% Total Sample	% Low Poverty	% Medium Poverty	% High Poverty
To write grant proposals	47%	50%	46%	44%
To inform ourselves about children's need	35%	44%	35%	27%
To do background research on an issue	28%	36%	26%	21%
To craft legislation, policies or programs	19%	26%	18%	14%
To check or confirm other data sources	17%	21%	17%	14%
In committee or council deliberations	17%	23%	16%	10%
In speeches	17%	22%	16%	12%
To hold state agencies accountable	13%	15%	14%	10%
Other uses	9%	12%	8%	8%
County does not use statistical information	30%	26%	30%	35%

*N=1543

The use of statistical information on children and families differs with the county level of median family income. Across all specific uses of statistical information, the percentage of counties using statistical information increases with an increasing county median income level. That is, the higher the county median family income level, the more likely its officials are to use statistical information for each specific purpose (Table E5).

Table E5. County Government Use of Statistical Information on Children and Families: Percentage Reporting Use by Total Sample and County Median Family Income Level*

How county governments use statistical information on children and families	% Total Sample	% Low Income	% Medium Income	% High Income
To write grant proposals	47%	41%	43%	56%
To inform ourselves about children's need	35%	24%	33%	49%
To do background research on an issue	28%	18%	22%	42%
To craft legislation, policies or programs	19%	13%	15%	28%
To check or confirm other data sources	17%	13%	16%	24%
In committee or council deliberations	17%	11%	14%	25%
In speeches	17%	11%	13%	27%
To hold state agencies accountable	13%	10%	13%	16%
Other uses	9%	7%	9%	12%
County does not use statistical information	30%	39%	33%	20%

*N=1543

Appendix F
County Officials' Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*

Familiarity with the *KIDS Count Data Book* varies by county urban-rural status. Officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties to be familiar with the *Data Book*. Specifically, officials of 32% of metropolitan, 19% of adjacent, and 19% of rural counties are familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* (Table F1).

Table F1. Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*: Percentage by Total Sample and County Urban-Rural Status*

Familiarity with the KIDS COUNT Data Book	% Total Sample	% Metro Counties	% Adjacent Counties	% Rural Counties
Familiar	24%	32%	19%	19%

*Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations. Twenty-four percent (n=349) of counties are familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*: 166 metropolitan, 72 adjacent, and 111 rural counties.

Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* differs by county government size. Officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to be familiar with the *Data Book*. Familiarity with the *Data Book* increases with increasing county government size: officials of 14% of small; 20% of medium; and 37% of large county governments are familiar with the *Data Book* (Table F2).

Table F2. Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*: Percentage by Total and County Government Size*

Familiarity with the KIDS COUNT Data Book	% Total Sample	% Small county Governments	% Medium county governments	% Large county governments
Familiar	24%	14%	20%	37%

* Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations. Twenty-four percent (n=322) of counties are familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*: 64 small, 92 medium, and 166 large size county governments.

Officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of county governments that provide fewer social services to be familiar with the *Data Book*. Familiarity with the *Data Book* increases with an increasing level of county government provided social services: officials of 14% of low; 22% of medium; and 35% of high social service level county governments are familiar with the *Data Book* (Table F3).

Table F3. Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*: Percentage by Total Sample and County Government Social Service Level*

Familiarity with the <i>Data Book</i>	% Total Sample	% Low Social Service	% Medium Social Service	% High Social Service
Familiar	24%	14%	22%	35%

* Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations. Twenty-four percent (n=349) of counties are familiar with the *Data Book*: 66 low; 122 medium; and 161 high social service level county governments.

Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* differs by county level of family poverty. Officials of counties with lower family poverty levels are more likely than officials of counties with higher family poverty levels to be familiar with the *Data Book*. Familiarity with the *Data Book* increases with a decreasing county level of family poverty: officials of 16% of high; 23% of medium; and 31% of low family poverty level counties are familiar with the *Data Book* (Table F4).

Table F4. Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*: Percentage by Total Sample and County Family Poverty Level*

Familiarity with the <i>Data Book</i>	% Total Sample	% Low Poverty	% Medium Poverty	% High Poverty
Familiar	24%	31%	23%	16%

* Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations. Twenty-four percent (n=349) of counties are familiar with the *Data Book*: 156 low, 112 medium, and 81 high family poverty level counties.

Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* differs by county level of median family income. Officials of counties with higher median family income counties are more likely than officials of lower median family income counties to be familiar with the *Data Book*. Familiarity with the *Data Book* increases with increasing county median family income level: officials of 16% of low; 18% of medium; and 37% of high median family income level counties are familiar with the *Data Book* (Table F5)

Table F5. Familiarity with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*: Percentage by Total Sample and County Median Family Income Level*

Familiarity with the <i>Data Book</i>	% Total Sample	% Low Income	% Medium Income	% High Income
Familiar	24%	16%	18%	37%

* Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations. Twenty-four percent (n=349) of counties are familiar with the *Data Book*: 78 low, 88 medium, and 183 high family median income level counties.

Appendix G How County Officials' Heard about KIDS COUNT

Mailing consistently ranks as the most common way in which county officials heard about KIDS COUNT across all county urban-rural statuses. However, officials of rural counties are much less likely than officials of adjacent and metropolitan counties to have received the *Data Book* in the mail. Officials of 40% of metropolitan and 40% of adjacent, but only 27% of rural counties received the *Data Book* in the mail (Table G1).

Advocacy groups, state government agencies and local government agencies are moderately effective channels for introducing county government officials to KIDS COUNT across all county urban-rural status types. Officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group. Moreover, officials of rural counties were more likely than officials of adjacent counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group. Officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties are somewhat more likely than officials of metropolitan counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a state government agency. In contrast, officials of metropolitan counties are somewhat more likely than officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a local government agency (Table G1).

Table G1. How County Officials Heard About KIDS COUNT: Percentage of Those Familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* Naming Each Source, Total and by County Urban-Rural Status*

How county officials heard about KIDS COUNT	% Total	% Metro Counties	% Adjacent Counties	% Rural Counties
Received the <i>Data Book</i> in the mail	36%	40%	40%	27%
From an advocacy group	28%	34%	18%	27%
From a state government agency	27%	23%	26%	32%
From a local government agency	24%	30%	14%	22%
From a service provider	17%	17%	15%	18%
In a newsletter or other publication	17%	18%	17%	17%
On the Internet	16%	18%	17%	12%
In the newspaper	15%	16%	10%	16%
On radio or television	10%	9%	10%	11%
Given the <i>Data Book</i> in person	10%	12%	6%	10%
From a constituent	7%	7%	7%	7%
From a local elected official	7%	9%	8%	2%
From a state legislator	5%	4%	11%	4%
From state legislative staff	3%	2%	7%	2%

* Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents could hear about KIDS COUNT in multiple ways. Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=349): 166 metropolitan, 72 adjacent, and 111 rural counties.

How county officials heard about KIDS COUNT varies with county government size. Mailing is an effective way of getting the Data Book to county officials for all sizes of county government. However, officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to have received the *Data Book* in the mail. Specifically, officials for 19% of small, 33% of medium, and 45% of large county governments received the *Data Book* in the mail (Table G2).

Advocacy groups, state government agencies and local government agencies are moderately effective channels for introducing information about KIDS COUNT to county officials across all county government sizes. However, officials of larger county governments were more likely than officials of smaller county governments to have heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group. Further, officials of smaller county governments are more likely than officials of larger county governments to have heard about the KIDS COUNT from a state government agency. In contrast, officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a local government agency (Table G2).

Table G2. How County Officials Heard about KIDS COUNT: Percentage of Those Familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* Naming Each Source, Total and by County Government Size*

How county officials heard about KIDS COUNT	% Total	% Small Governments	% Medium Governments	% Large Governments
Received the Data Book in the mail	36%	19%	33%	45%
From an advocacy group	29%	22%	21%	36%
From a state government agency	26%	31%	27%	23%
From a local government agency	24%	16%	22%	28%
From a service provider	18%	19%	18%	17%
In a newsletter or other publication	17%	16%	20%	16%
On the Internet	16%	9%	18%	18%
In the newspaper	15%	19%	14%	14%
On radio or television	11%	19%	7%	10%
Given the Data Book in person	10%	6%	9%	13%
From a constituent	7%	11%	4%	7%
From a local elected official	7%	2%	7%	10%
From a state legislator	4%	2%	7%	4%
From state legislative staff	2%	5%	1%	2%

*Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents could hear about KIDS COUNT in multiple ways. Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book* excluding missing observations (n=322): 64 small, 92 medium, and 166 large county governments.

Receiving the *Data Book* by mail is the most common way officials heard about the KIDS COUNT regardless of a county government’s level of social service provision. However, officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of county governments that provide fewer social services to have received the *Data Book* in the mail. Officials of 29% of low, 35% of medium, and 40% of high social service level county governments received the *Data Book* in the mail (Table G3).

Advocacy groups, state government agencies, and local government agencies are moderately effective channels for introducing county officials to information about KIDS COUNT regardless of the county government social service provision level. However, officials of high social service level county governments are more likely than officials of medium and low social service level county governments to have heard about KIDS COUNT from an advocacy group. Officials of medium social service level county governments are more likely to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a state government agency than are officials of high and low social service level counties. In contrast, officials of high social service level county governments are more likely than officials of medium and low social service level county governments to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a local government agency (Table G3).

Table G3. How County Officials Heard about KIDS COUNT: Percentage of Those Familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* Naming Each Source, Total and by County Government Social Service Level*

How county officials heard about KIDS COUNT	% Total	% Low Social Service	% Medium Social Service	% High Social Service
Received the Data Book in the mail	36%	29%	35%	40%
From an advocacy group	28%	24%	25%	32%
From a state government agency	27%	20%	33%	25%
From a local government agency	24%	17%	22%	29%
From a service provider	17%	18%	19%	16%
In a newsletter or other publication	17%	17%	13%	21%
On the Internet	16%	9%	16%	18%
In the newspaper	15%	20%	11%	15%
On radio or television	10%	14%	11%	7%
Given the Data Book in person	10%	9%	6%	14%
From a constituent	7%	8%	8%	6%
From a local elected official	7%	9%	7%	6%
From a state legislator	5%	2%	8%	4%
From state legislative staff	3%	2%	3%	4%

*Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents could hear about KIDS COUNT in multiple ways. Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=349): 66 low, 122 medium, and 161 high social service level counties.

Mailing is an effective way of getting the *Data Book* to county officials regardless of county family poverty level. However, officials of lower family poverty level counties are more likely than officials of higher family poverty level counties to have received the *Data Book* in the mail. Officials of 23% of high, 38% of medium, and 41% of low family poverty level counties received the *Data Book* in the mail (Table G4).

Advocacy groups, state government agencies, and local government agencies are moderately effective channels for introducing information about KIDS COUNT to county officials regardless of the county family poverty level. However, officials of lower family poverty level counties are more likely than officials of higher family poverty level counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from each of these three sources (Table G4).

Table G4. How County Officials Heard about KIDS COUNT: Percentage of Those Familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* Naming Each Source, Total and by County Family Poverty Level*

How county officials heard about KIDS COUNT	% Total	% Low Poverty	% Medium Poverty	% High Poverty
Received the Data Book in the mail	36%	41%	38%	23%
From an advocacy group	28%	33%	27%	22%
From a state government agency	27%	27%	28%	25%
From a local government agency	24%	28%	25%	16%
From a service provider	17%	19%	16%	16%
In a newsletter or other publication	17%	21%	14%	15%
On the Internet	16%	19%	14%	11%
In the newspaper	15%	14%	13%	17%
On radio or television	10%	8%	9%	14%
Given the Data Book in person	10%	13%	9%	5%
From a constituent	7%	6%	5%	10%
From a local elected official	7%	8%	6%	4%
From a state legislator	5%	5%	3%	9%
From state legislative staff	3%	3%	1%	7%

*Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents could hear about KIDS COUNT in multiple ways. Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=349): 156 low, 112 medium, and 81 high family poverty level counties.

Mailing is an effective way of getting the *Data Book* to county officials regardless of the county median family income level. However, officials of higher median family income level counties are more likely than officials of lower median family income level counties to have received the *Data Book* in the mail. Officials of 26% of low, 41% of medium, and 38% of high median family income level counties received the *Data Book* in the mail (Table G5).

Advocacy groups, state government agencies, and local government agencies are moderately effective channels for introducing county officials to information about KIDS COUNT regardless of the county median family income level. However, officials of higher median family income level counties are more likely than officials of lower median family income counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from advocacy groups. Officials of medium level median family income counties are more likely than officials for high and low level median family income counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a state government agency. In contrast, officials of higher median family income level counties are more likely than officials of lower median family income level counties to have heard about KIDS COUNT from a local government agency (Table G5).

Table G5. How County Officials Heard about KIDS COUNT: Percentage of Those Familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* Naming Each Source, Total and by County Median Family Income Level*

How county officials heard about KIDS COUNT	% Total	% Low Income	% Medium Income	% High Income
Received the Data Book in the mail	36%	26%	41%	38%
From an advocacy group	28%	19%	27%	33%
From a state government agency	27%	26%	34%	23%
From a local government agency	24%	17%	19%	30%
From a service provider	17%	18%	16%	17%
In a newsletter or other publication	17%	14%	20%	17%
On the Internet	16%	12%	14%	19%
In the newspaper	15%	17%	8%	11%
On radio or television	10%	13%	7%	10%
Given the Data Book in person	10%	6%	6%	14%
From a constituent	7%	10%	8%	5%
From a local elected official	7%	4%	6%	8%
From a state legislator	5%	9%	5%	4%
From state legislative staff	3%	6%	2%	2%

*Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents could hear about KIDS COUNT in multiple ways. Percentages are based on those familiar with the *Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=349): 78 low; 88 medium; and 183 high median family income level counties.

Appendix H Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs

Impact on Public Awareness of Problems faced by Children and Families

The perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness of problems faced by children and families varies with county urban-rural status. Officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness. That is, a higher percentage of officials of metropolitan (54%) than adjacent (40%) or rural (38%) counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness as major or moderate (Table H1).

Table H1. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Awareness of Problems Faced by Children and Families: Percentage by Total and County Urban-Rural Status*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC AWARENESS	% Total	% Metro Counties	% Adjacent Counties	% Rural Counties
Major impact	8%	10%	6%	6%
Moderate impact	38%	44%	34%	32%
Minor impact	22%	19%	25%	23%
No impact	2%	0%	6%	3%
Can't say	30%	27%	28%	36%

*Percentages based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=339): 161 metropolitan; 67 adjacent; and 111 rural counties.

Officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness of problems facing children and families. Specifically, officials of 35% of small, 42% of medium, and 54% of large county governments rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness as major or moderate. In general, the perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness increases with increasing county government size (Table H2).

Table H2. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Awareness of Problems Faced by Children and Families: Percentage by Total and County Government Size*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC AWARENESS	% Total	% Small governments	% Medium governments	% Large Governments
Major impact	8%	8%	8%	9%
Moderate impact	38%	27%	34%	45%
Minor impact	22%	19%	19%	25%
No impact	2%	3%	0%	2%
Can't say	30%	42%	39%	19%

*Percentages are based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=311): 62 small, 89 medium, and 160 large county governments.

Officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of county governments that provide fewer social services to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness of problems facing children and families. Officials of 34% of low, 41% of medium, and 55% of high social service level county governments rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness as major or moderate (Table H3).

Table H3. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Awareness of Problems Faced by Children and Families: Percentage by Total and County Social Service Level*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC AWARENESS	% Total	% Low Social Service	% Medium Social Service	% High Social Service
Major impact	8%	6%	9%	8%
Moderate impact	38%	28%	32%	47%
Minor impact	22%	22%	23%	21%
No impact	2%	5%	2%	1%
Can't say	30%	39%	35%	23%

*Percentages are based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=339): 64 low, 120 medium, and 155 high social service level counties.

Officials of counties with lower family poverty levels are more likely than officials of counties with higher family poverty levels to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness. Officials of 49% of low, 45% of medium, and 40% of high family poverty level counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness as major or moderate (Table H4).

Table H4. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Awareness of Problems Faced by Children and Families: Percentage by Total and County Family Poverty Level*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC AWARENESS	% Total	% Low Poverty	% Medium Poverty	% High Poverty
Major impact	8%	6%	8%	11%
Moderate impact	38%	43%	37%	29%
Minor impact	22%	22%	21%	23%
No impact	2%	1%	1%	5%
Can't say	30%	28%	32%	32%

*Percentages based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=339): 153 low, 107 medium, and 79 high family poverty level counties.

Officials of counties with higher median family income levels are generally more likely than others to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public awareness. Officials of 39% of low, 36% of medium, and 54% of high median family income level counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public awareness as major or moderate (Table H5).

Table H5. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Awareness of Problems Faced by Children and Families: Percentage by Total County Median Family Income Level*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC AWARENESS	% Total	% Low Income	% Medium Income	% High Income
Major impact	8%	9%	9%	7%
Moderate impact	38%	30%	27%	47%
Minor impact	22%	20%	30%	19%
No impact	2%	4%	2%	1%
Can't say	30%	37%	31%	27%

*Percentages based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=339): 76 low; 86 medium; and 177 high family median income level counties.

Impact on Public Policy in their State

The perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy varies with county urban-rural status. Officials of metropolitan counties are more likely than officials of non-metropolitan (adjacent and rural) counties to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy in their state. That is, a higher percentage of officials of metropolitan (46%) than adjacent (40%) and rural (26%)

counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy as major or moderate (Table H6).

Table H6. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Policy in Their State: Percentage by Total and County Urban-Rural Status*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC POLICY	% Total	% Metro Counties	% Adjacent Counties	% Rural Counties
Major impact	5%	6%	4%	4%
Moderate impact	34%	40%	36%	22%
Minor impact	27%	25%	22%	32%
No impact	3%	1%	4%	4%
Can't say	32%	27%	33%	39%

*Percentages based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=340): 161 metropolitan, 69 adjacent, and 110 rural counties.

Officials of larger county governments are more likely than officials of smaller county governments to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy in their state. Specifically, officials of 32% of small, 34% of medium, and 43% of large county governments rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy as major or moderate. In general, the perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy increases with increasing county government size (Table H7).

Table H7. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Policy in Their State: Percentage by Total and County Government Size*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC POLICY	% Total Sample	% Small governments	% Medium governments	% Large governments
Major impact	5%	3%	3%	6%
Moderate impact	34%	29%	31%	37%
Minor impact	26%	21%	22%	31%
No impact	3%	10%	1%	1%
Can't say	32%	38%	42%	25%

*Percentages are based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=312): 63 small, 90 medium, and 159 large county governments.

Officials of county governments that provide more social services are more likely than officials of county governments that provide fewer social services to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy in their state. Officials of 30% of low, 30% of medium, and 49% of high social service level county governments rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy as major or moderate. In general, the perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs increases with an increasing level of county government provided social services (Table H8).

Table H8. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Policy in Their State: Percentage by Total and County Government Social Service Level*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC POLICY	% Total sample	% Low county social services	% Medium county social services	% High county social services
Major impact	5%	5%	5%	5%
Moderate impact	34%	25%	25%	44%
Minor impact	27%	26%	29%	25%
No impact	3%	3%	2%	3%
Can't say	32%	42%	39%	23%

*Percentages are based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=340): 65 low; 120 medium; and 155 high social service level counties.

Officials of counties with lower family poverty levels are more likely than officials of counties with higher family poverty levels to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy in their state. Officials of 41% of low, 40% of medium, and 32% of high family poverty level counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy as major or moderate. In general, the perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy increases with a decreasing county level of family poverty (Table H9).

Table H9. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Policy in Their State: Percentage by Total and County Family Poverty Level*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC POLICY	% Total	% Low Poverty	% Medium Poverty	% High Poverty
Major impact	5%	3%	6%	8%
Moderate impact	34%	38%	34%	24%
Minor impact	27%	25%	28%	29%
No impact	3%	2%	3%	4%
Can't say	32%	32%	30%	35%

*Percentages based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=340): 154 low; 107 medium; and 79 high family poverty level counties.

Officials of counties with higher median family income levels are generally more likely than others to think KIDS COUNT programs have had at least a moderate impact on public policy in their state. Officials of 30% of low, 42% of medium, and 39% of high median family income level counties rate the impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy as major or moderate. In general, the perceived impact of KIDS COUNT programs on public policy increases with an increasing county level of median family income (Table H10).

Table H10. Perceived Impact of KIDS COUNT Programs on Public Policy in Their State: Percentage by Total and County Median Family Income Level*

Impact of KIDS COUNT programs on PUBLIC POLICY	% Total	% Low Income	% Medium Income	% High Income
Major impact	5%	5%	5%	4%
Moderate impact	34%	25%	37%	35%
Minor impact	27%	30%	23%	28%
No impact	3%	4%	2%	2%
Can't say	32%	37%	33%	30%

*Percentages based on those familiar with the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, excluding missing observations (n=340): 76 low; 86 medium; and 178 high median family income level counties.