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New report calls for coordinated approach to connect low-income families with tools to achieve stability

TOPEKA—A new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation calls for comprehensive efforts to lift kids out of poverty, including delivering high-quality early childhood education and providing parents with access to job training and other tools that enable them to support their families.

The KIDS COUNT policy report, “Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach,” outlines how the public, nonprofit and private sectors must work together to reduce poverty among the 10 million low-income families with young children in the United States. The recommendations propose integrating state and federal employment, education and child care programs for parents and children to create better opportunities for families.

“With 95,000 low-income families with children living in Kansas, the social safety-net plays an important role in helping parents and kids meet their basic needs,” said Shannon Cotsoradis, president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children. “However, a fundamental anti-poverty program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, is experiencing decreasing caseloads that do not reflect the increase in poverty across Kansas. It’s time to revise TANF policies to ensure this program is working for Kansas families instead of against them.”

The Casey Foundation’s two-generation approach seeks to equip families with the tools and skills to get on a path to opportunity and overcome some of the obstacles they face, such as inflexible and unpredictable jobs that do not offer high enough wages to support a family; lack of access to high-quality, reliable early child care and education; and increased stress levels for parents and children. The report describes specific strategies for addressing these challenges so that parents can fully nurture and support their children and, ultimately, build better futures for themselves and their kids.

The report outlines three broad recommendations:

- Create policies that equip parents and children with the income, tools and skills they need to succeed—as a family and as individuals.
- Put common sense into common practice by structuring public systems to respond to the realities facing today’s families.
- Use existing child, adult and neighborhood programs and platforms to build evidence for practical pathways out of poverty for entire families.

The entire report is available at www.aecf.org. The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation’s children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow.



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