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Kansas ranks 30th in nation for uninsured kids KIDS COUNT report shows 60,000 children lack health insurance

TOPEKA – According to the 2012 KIDS COUNT Data Book, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kansas ranks in the bottom half of states for the number of children without health insurance.

This year's Data Book provides an even more comprehensive portrait of how America's children are faring. Rankings are based on 16 indicators of child well-being, a change from previous annual rankings based on 10 indicators. The 16 indicators are organized into four categories: health, economic well-being, education and family and community. Each state is ranked overall and in each of the four categories. Kansas is 16th overall.

The Data Book shows that 60,000 Kansas children do not have health insurance, putting the state 30th in the nation on this indicator (data from 2010). Although efforts are under way to increase enrollment in the state's Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program, collectively known as HealthWave, Kansas' rank has dropped seven spots in just two years, indicating that other states have made more significant progress in reaching uninsured kids.

"Approximately 70 percent of these uninsured children qualify for HealthWave," said Shannon Cotsoradis, president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children. "As HealthWave becomes KanCare, it's essential that we not only enroll more eligible children but also maintain coverage for current beneficiaries during the transition so the problem doesn't become worse."

In education indicators, Kansas ranks 22nd for percentage of children ages 3 and 4 not enrolled in preschool (53 percent) and 10th for percentage of fourth-graders reading below proficiency (64 percent). Studies show that children who attend high-quality early learning programs are far more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn, read at grade level by third grade and graduate from high school.

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Shaping policy that puts children first

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Other key findings from the 2012 KIDS COUNT report (all data from 2010 unless otherwise noted):

- 80 percent of teens are graduating from high school on time (data from 2008-09). Kansas ranks 15th in the nation on this indicator.
- 18 percent of Kansas kids are living in poverty, a 20 percent increase from 2005, when 15 percent of kids lived in poverty.
- 27 percent of Kansas kids are living in homes in which no parent has full-time, year-round employment.

The KIDS COUNT Data Book includes the latest data on child well-being for every state and the District of Columbia. Additionally, the KIDS COUNT Data Center – datacenter.kidscount.org – contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of other measures of child well-being. The Data Center allows users to create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and to view real-time information on mobile devices.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private national philanthropy that creates better futures for the nation’s children by strengthening families, building economic opportunities and transforming neighborhoods into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org.

For more than 30 years, Kansas Action for Children has been shaping policy that puts children first. In the fall, KAC will release the Kansas KIDS COUNT report, which compares child well-being at the county level. Visit www.kac.org to learn more.