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25th Edition of KIDS COUNT Data Book Shows Kansas Worsens in All Economic Indicators

TOPEKA— Kansas is moving in the wrong direction when it comes to the economic well-being of children, according to the latest KIDS COUNT Data Book, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

This year marks the 25th edition of the Data Book, which ranks each state in 16 indicators of child well-being in four domains: economic well-being, education, health and family and community. Kansas ranks 15th overall this year, up one spot from 2013.

In all four indicators of economic well-being, Kansas' numbers have worsened. Most significantly, the percentage of Kansas children living in poverty has risen from 15 percent in 2005 to 19 percent in 2012. This year, Kansas ranks 20th in the nation on this indicator.

“Poor children will be especially vulnerable in this time of diminishing state revenues,” said Shannon Cotsoradis, president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children. “Public investments matter if we’re serious about lifting children out of poverty. Changing the trajectory for poor children is about making sure they have access to adequate food, shelter, health care and early learning opportunities.”

While Kansas has shown improvement in health indicators, progress is not keeping pace with other states. The percentage of children without health insurance has decreased from 8 percent in 2008 to 7 percent in 2012. In that same time period, the nation experienced a 3 percent decrease in children without health insurance.

“Even when we’re making progress, those gains are failing to keep up with the rest of the nation,” Cotsoradis said. “We’re falling behind instead of enacting smart policies that would change lives for the better.”

Other highlights from the Data Book:

- From 2008 to 2012, the number of Kansas children living in high-poverty areas increased to 56,000, or 8 percent, from 2 percent in 2000.
- The percentage of babies born at a low birth-weight decreased slightly to 7.1 in 2012 from 7.2 in 2005.
- The teen birth rate improved from 56 per 1,000 births in 2005 to 34 per 1,000 births in 2012.
- Although the percentage of children age 3 and 4 not attending preschool has decreased slightly, it stands at 54 percent.
- 62 percent of Kansas fourth-graders scored below proficient in reading.



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The [KIDS COUNT Data Book](#) features the latest data on child well-being for every state, the District of Columbia and the nation. This information is available in the [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#), which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of measures of child well-being. Data Center users can create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and view real-time information on mobile devices.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org.

For more than 30 years, Kansas Action for Children has worked to shape health, education and economic policy that puts children first. Visit kac.org to learn more about our policy priorities and to view KIDS COUNT data at the state and county levels. This October, KAC will issue the Kansas KIDS COUNT report with updated county-level data.