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2014 KIDS COUNT Data Book Fact Sheet

BALTIMORE — The 2014 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* marks 25 years of bringing attention to national and state-level data on the well-being of children. The 25th edition examines two major areas: 1) data from 1990, the first year the *Data Book* was published, that show the major trends in child well-being and 2) recent trends that compare data from years 2005 to 2012 and include state rankings. The recent trends show how kids are faring mid-decade prior to the economic crisis, compared to how they are doing in the aftermath.

National Trends in Child Well-Being Since 1990

Economic Well-Being: The Official Child Poverty rate as defined by the federal government dropped from 18 to 16 percent from 1990 to 2000. But by 2010 it had reached 22 percent and has remained roughly at that level. However the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) first used by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2011 shows a much higher national child poverty rate 20 years ago, reaching 29 percent in 1993, but having a fairly steady decline to 17 percent in 2009. The SPM gives a fuller measure of family expenses and resources including safety net programs, such as tax credits, food assistance and subsidies for child care and housing. Today, more young people are in school or working compared to 1990.

Education: In the past two decades, preschool attendance among 3- and 4-year-olds has increased by 34 percent. National math and reading scores as well as high school graduation rates have steadily improved for students of all races and income levels, with most of these positive developments preceding the many policy changes of the last decade.

Health: Only one health indicator has worsened since 1990 – the percentage of low-birthweight babies. There has been increased access to health insurance for children, with 13 percent of children being uninsured in 1990 compared with fewer than 9 percent in 2012. Mortality rates for children and teens continues to fall as a result of medical advances and increased usage of seat belts, car seats and bike helmets.

Family and Community: The percentage of children living in single-parent families has risen significantly. In 2012, just over a third (35 percent) of children were living with a single parent, up from 25 percent in 1990; these figures include children living with co-habiting parents. The rate of children living in areas of concentrated poverty has increased, with 13 percent of children living in a neighborhood where the poverty rate is 30 percent or more compared with 11 percent in 1990. The teen birth rate is at a historic low, declining by more than half between 1990 and 2012. Another positive

development is the increase in the education level of parents, a drop in the percent of children living in families with a parent without a high school diploma – 22 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2012.

Trends Between 2005 and 2012 Using the Sixteen Indicators of the KIDS COUNT Index

Economic Well-Being

- Percentage of children in poverty (income below \$23,283 for a family of two adults and two children in 2012)
- Percentage of children whose parents lack secure employment (no full-time, year-round work)
- Percentage of children living in households with a high housing cost burden (spend more than 30 percent of income on housing)
- Percentage of teens not in school and not working (ages 16 to 19)

Education

- Percentage of children not in preschool (ages 3 to 4)
- Percentage of fourth graders not proficient in reading
- Percentage of eighth graders not proficient in math
- Percentage of high school students not graduating on time

Health

- Percentage of low-birthweight babies
- Percentage of children without health insurance
- Child and teen death rate (per 100,000 children ages 1 to 19)
- Percentage of teens who abuse alcohol or drugs (ages 12 to 17)

Family and Community

- Percentage of children living in single-parent families
- Percentage of children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma
- Percentage of children living in high-poverty areas (census tracts with poverty rates of 30 percent or more)
- Teen birth rate (per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19)

Since roughly 2005, children have continued to see gains in education and health, while experiencing setbacks in economic well-being and some of the measures in the family and community domain.

Short-term trends at the national level:

- **Improvements:** All four education indicators that cover key milestones in child development such as preschool attendance and high school graduation showed steady improvements in recent years. Child health also continues to improve across all four indicators. The good news is that more children have access to health insurance coverage compared to before the recession. There are also drops in child and teen mortality and teen substance abuse. The percent of low-birthweight babies declined slightly which is a positive indication that the nation continues to turn the curve on this indicator. The teen birth rate continued its steady decline and is at a historic low. Also in the family and community domain, there was a small drop in the percent of children living in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma

- **Declines:** Three of the four economic well-being indicators were worse than the mid-decade years, which is not surprising, given the depth and severity of the economic crisis over the last six years and the high unemployment rate. However, the majority of the indicators in this area improved slightly at the national level since last year's *Data Book*, indicating modest but hopeful signs of recovery. In addition, the percent of children living in single-parent families continued to increase and more children are living in high-poverty areas.

The national and state rankings in the 2014 *Data Book* can be compared with the 2013 rankings to see how a state has improved or worsened in the 16 categories. They are not, however, comparable with rankings in the 1990 through 2011 *Data Books*, which use the old 10-indicator index.

Rankings in Child Well-Being in the 2014 *Data Book*

Top Five States Overall: Massachusetts, Vermont, Iowa, New Hampshire and Minnesota.

Lowest Five States Overall: Arizona, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico and Mississippi.

Economic Well-Being: Top five states – North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska.

Bottom five states – Arizona, Nevada, California, New Mexico and Mississippi.

Education: Top five states – Massachusetts, New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire and Connecticut.

Bottom five states – West Virginia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico and Nevada.

Health: Top five states – Iowa, Massachusetts, Maine, Utah and New York.

Bottom five states – Alaska, Nevada, Mississippi, New Mexico and Montana.

Family and Community: Top five states – New Hampshire, Utah, Vermont, North Dakota and Minnesota.

Bottom five states – Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Mississippi.

Biggest Improvements in Overall Rankings: Iowa moved from No. 7 to No.3 and four states moved up three places (Utah from 14 to 11; Illinois from 23 to 20; Indiana from 30 to 27 and Tennessee from 39 to 36) compared to the 2013 *Data Book*.

Biggest Drops in Overall Rankings: Wyoming fell four spots from No. 15 to 19 and four states fell three spots (New Hampshire from 1 to 4; New Jersey from 5 to 8; Montana from 28 to 31; Oklahoma from 36 to 39).

Note on data sources: The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses the most up-to-date estimates from federal statistical agencies including the U.S. Census Bureau, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Center for Education Statistics and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. For more information, see the Definitions and Sources section at aecf.org/databook2014.

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The KIDS COUNT Data Book with state-by-state rankings and supplemental data is embargoed until 12:01 a.m. EDT, July 22, 2014. Once released, it can be viewed at <http://www.aecf.org/resources/the-2014-kids-count-data-book/>. Users can download the complete Data Book, access hundreds of other measures of child well-being and view real-time information on mobile devices.

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