



555 West Washington Ave, Suite 200  
Madison, WI 53703

www.wccf.org  
☎ 608-284-0580  
✉ 608-284-0583

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE until 12:01 a.m. EDT, July 22, 2014  
Contact: Ken Taylor, 608-284-0580, ext. 302

## 25th Edition of *KIDS COUNT Data Book* Shows How Well-Being of Wisconsin Children has Changed

Wisconsin's children have made important gains in the areas of health and education, but are considerably worse off economically than they were 25 years ago.

“Thanks to investments Wisconsin has made in child well-being, we’ve made great progress in ensuring that many of our children grow up healthy and have access to high-quality schools,” said Jim Moeser, KIDS COUNT Director at the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. “But we still have a lot of work ahead of us to make sure that Wisconsin children, especially children of color, have equal opportunities for success.”

Wisconsin currently ranks 13<sup>th</sup> among the states in child well-being, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 25<sup>th</sup> edition of its annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. Wisconsin's overall rank has been relatively consistent in recent years; last year Wisconsin ranked 12<sup>th</sup> overall.

The 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* offers an opportunity to examine our progress in making sure that every child is offered the opportunity to succeed. The last 25 years have brought significant changes to Wisconsin children, including:

- **Steady gains in education and health.** In education, more Wisconsin students are graduating on time, math proficiency has risen, and more young children have access to preschool now than before. In the health area, Wisconsin now has fewer child deaths, fewer children without health insurance, and fewer youth abusing alcohol or drugs. One area of concern is that the number of low-birth weight babies born in Wisconsin has risen.
- **Economic progress still lags, even after the end of the recession.** More Wisconsin children live in poverty, live in households with high housing costs, or live in a household in which no parent works full time. This is particularly troubling because we now know much more about the long-term challenges growing up in poverty creates for our children.
- **Mixed trends for Family and Community indicators.** Teen births in Wisconsin have dropped to historic lows, and the number of children living in families where the head of household lacks a high school diploma has also decreased. However, there has been an increase in the percent of Wisconsin children living in single-parent families, and more children live in high-poverty areas.

“We’re all better off when *all* Wisconsin children do well,” said Moeser. “Many of our children are better off than they were in past years, but that picture is not the same for children of color. So, we need to make sure all families have the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty and reduce the high level of disparities that exist between white and non-white children and families.” Moeser added, “We have a responsibility to strengthen our communities by investing in all of our children.”

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, published annually by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, includes data on child well-being in every state and the nation. The *Data Book* will be available at 12:01 EDT, on July 22, 2014 on the Casey Foundation [website](#).

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families is a multi-issue child and family research, public education and advocacy organization focused on improving the health, economic security, safety and education of all Wisconsin children.