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UNDER EMBARGO until Tuesday, September 25 at 12:01 a.m. ET

Georgia Missing Opportunities to Give Young Adult Parents and Their Kids a Boost

New Casey Foundation report illuminates barriers facing Georgia's young parents and their children

ATLANTA— Georgia's 111,000 young adult parents are struggling to support their children and fulfill their own potential, because they lack access to opportunities to advance their education and find family-sustaining jobs, according to *Opening Doors for Young Parents*, a new KIDS COUNT® policy report the Annie E. Casey Foundation released today.

Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GaFCP)—the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT grantee in Georgia—joined the call for action so these young parents can become productive members of their communities and contribute to Georgia's economy.

The 50-state report reveals that, at 12 percent, Georgia is above the national average (10 percent) of youth ages 18 to 24 who are also young parents. The report also highlights some statewide trends and areas of concern:

- 135,000 children in Georgia have young parents ages 18 to 24.
- 85 percent of children of young parents in Georgia live in low-income families, the highest percentage in the country.
- Only 11 percent of young parents ages 18 to 24 have completed an associate degree or higher.
- 59 percent of Georgia's young parents are people of color, facing challenges exacerbated by discrimination and systemic inequities, with their children standing to suffer the most.

"This population is one we can't afford to overlook," said GaFCP Executive Director Gaye Smith. "Ensuring that young adult parents have access to education and workforce training will only strengthen Georgia's economy, and ensuring that their children have access to high-quality early care and learning puts Georgia's next generation on the path to success."

The report spotlights a national population of more than 6 million, including 2.9 million young adult parents, ages 18 to 24, and 3.4 million children nationwide living with young parents. *Opening Doors for Young Parents* illuminates the most common obstacles young adult parents

face, including incomplete education, lack of family-sustaining employment opportunities, lack of access to quality child care, and inadequate and unstable housing and financial insecurity.

These barriers threaten not only these young adults, but also their children, setting off a chain of diminished opportunities for two of our future generations. However, the report outlines solutions for addressing the obstacles young parents face. The Casey Foundation stresses the importance of a two-generation approach to equip young parents for success.

“If we don’t support young people when they become parents, we’re cheating two generations out of having a positive future,” warned Casey Foundation President and CEO Patrick McCarthy. “We can help young adult parents develop the skills they need to raise their children, contribute to their communities, and drive our national economy forward.”

GaFCP works with partners at the state and local level to promote the importance of education, for both young parents and their children, as a vital factor in our state’s employment landscape and future economic security.

“In an increasingly competitive workforce landscape, education can make a significant difference in earning power for families,” said Rebecca Rice, Georgia KIDS COUNT Manager. “However, as the data demonstrate, young adult parents here in Georgia, like young parents nationwide, do not have the post-secondary education or specialized skills to obtain family-sustaining jobs.”

Release Information

Opening Doors for Young Parents will be available September 25 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at <https://www.aecf.org/opening-doors-for-young-parents>. Reporters may request an embargoed copy beginning September 18.

About Georgia Family Connection Partnership

Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GaFCP) is a public-private partnership created by the State of Georgia and investors from the private sector to assist communities in addressing the serious challenges facing children and families. GaFCP also serves as a resource to state agencies across Georgia that work to improve the conditions of children and families. Georgia KIDS COUNT provides policymakers and citizens with current data they need to make informed decisions regarding priorities, services, and resources that impact Georgia’s children, youth, families, and communities. Georgia KIDS COUNT is funded, in part, through a grant from The Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. For more information, visit gafcp.org.

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

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 aecf.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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