



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

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### **In Kansas, Young Parents and Their Children Face Life-Altering Barriers**

*New KIDS COUNT report from Casey Foundation shows how important education, employment opportunities are for families led by young adults*

**TOPEKA, Kansas** — There are some 29,000 young adult parents aged 18 to 24 in Kansas, and they face barriers in education and employment that can have lifelong ramifications for themselves and their children.

The new KIDS COUNT® policy report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Opening Doors for Young Parents*, documents the hurdles faced by these parents. In Kansas, particularly, the needs are pressing, with 72 percent of children of young parents living in low-income families.

Kansas Action for Children has joined the call for action so these young parents can contribute to the Sunflower State's communities and economy.

"We can't ignore the challenges faced every day by young parents and their children," said KAC Vice President of Advocacy John Wilson. "We owe these kids the best possible start in life, and we also owe their parents the opportunity to excel. A financially stable, nurturing home makes a difference for children and adults."

The fifty-state report shows that, at 11 percent, Kansas is above the national average (10 percent) of youth ages 18 to 24 who are young parents. Overall, there are 36,000 children in Kansas with parents aged 18 to 24.

The report spotlights a national population of more than 6 million, including nearly 2.9 million young adult parents, and 3.4 million children living with them. *Opening Doors for Young Parents* illuminates the most common obstacles these parents face, such as

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

These barriers threaten not only young parents, but also their young children, setting off a chain of diminished opportunities for two generations. The report includes recommendations for addressing the obstacles that such parents face, most of which can be driven by policy solutions at the state level.

Kansas Action for Children further stresses the importance of helping the state's young parents access educational and employment opportunities. In an ever-evolving and competitive workforce, education makes a big difference in earning power for families. However, as the data demonstrate, young parents nationwide often lack the post-secondary education or specialized skills needed for family-sustaining jobs.

"If we don't support young people when they become parents, we are cheating two generations out of having a positive future," said 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."

### **Release Information**

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

### **About Kansas Action for Children**

Kansas Action for Children is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to improving the lives of Kansas children and families by providing comprehensive data, advocating for sound public policy and collaborating with lawmakers. Through support from individuals and private foundations, KAC has worked for nearly 40 years to make our state the best place to live, work and raise a family. Visit [www.kac.org](http://www.kac.org) to learn more.

### **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 [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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