



Contact:
DC Action for Children
Aparna Kumar
202-234-9404
akumar@dckids.org

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2011 KIDS COUNT *DATA BOOK*: D.C. Weathers Recession with Scant Improvements in Child Well-Being

D.C. Still Among the Worst in Low-Birth-Weight, Mortality, Parental Unemployment and Child Poverty

(WASHINGTON, Aug. 17, 2011) Children and youth in the nation's capital have been hit hard by the recent recession and continuing economic hardships for families, according to the 2011 KIDS COUNT *Data Book*, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Among the states and territories, the District has the highest percent of children under 18 living in poverty (29 percent) and living in families without secure parental employment (44 percent), with the exception of only Puerto Rico.

"The KIDS COUNT report highlights what all of us who work as child advocates in the District know so well: Children in the nation's capital have some of the *worst outcomes in the nation*," said HyeSook Chung, executive director of DC Action for Children. "The District's children are extremely dependent on safety net programs such as Medicaid and food stamps for their health and nutrition, and during these difficult times for families, we need to protect these programs to ensure that our children have a fair chance at success in school and life."

Despite the grim situation, the *Data Book* highlights some improvements in D.C.:

- A 46 percent decline in the percent of teens who are neither in school nor high school graduates between 2000 and 2009.
- The percent of low birth-weight babies declined by 12 percent from 2000-2008, but is still among the worst in the nation; rate of death for children ages 1-14 declined by six percent from 2000-2007; and the teen death rate declined by 15 percent from 2000-2007. The child and teen death rates are still among the highest in the nation.
- The teen birth rate decline by four percent from 2000 to 2008.

According to data in the 22nd annual KIDS COUNT *Data Book* the economic and social gains for children that occurred across the 1990s stalled, even before the economic downturn began. This year's *Data Book* reports an eighteen percent increase in the U.S. child poverty rate between 2000 and 2009. This increase means that 2.5 million more American children are living below the federal poverty line (\$21,756 for a family of two

adults and two children) and effectively wiping out the gains made on this important measure in the late 1990s.

In an ongoing effort to track the impact of the recession, there are two new indicators in this year's data set -- the number of children impacted by foreclosure and households with at least one unemployed parent. In D.C., 4,000 or four percent of the state's children were impacted by foreclosure since 2007. In 2010, an estimated 16,000 or 15 percent of children in this state lived in households where there was at least one parent who was eligible for and or seeking employment, but was unemployed at the time the data were collected.

In addition to the 10 key measures tracked in the *Data Book*, the KIDS COUNT Data Center (<http://datacenter.kidscount.org>) provides easy, online access to the latest child well-being data on hundreds of indicators by state, county, city, and school district. It serves as a comprehensive source of information for policymakers, advocates, members of the media and others concerned with addressing the needs of children, families and communities. By visiting the Data Center, users can download the complete *Data Book*, and create interactive maps and graphs. Visit the new mobile site being launched in conjunction with this year's *Data Book* from your smartphone, such as the Droid, BlackBerry or iPhone.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* with state-by-state rankings and supplemental data launches at 12:01 a.m. EDT, August 17, 2011 at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>. For interactive D.C. KIDS COUNT data, visit <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/StateLanding.aspx?state=DC> 10.

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DC Action for Children (www.dckids.org)

Founded in 1992, DC Action for Children is a nonprofit advocacy organization focused on improving conditions and outcomes for the District's children, youth and families through public awareness, policy, research and partnerships. DC Action is the KIDS COUNT agency for the District, tracking key indicators of child and youth well-being.