



*Working to make North Carolina
the best place to be and raise a child*

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Rebecca Clendenin
Director of Communications
Office: 919-834-6623 x 226
Fax: 919-829-7299
E-mail: rebecca@ncchild.org

NORTH CAROLINA RANK MOVES TO 39TH IN CHILD WELL-BEING, FROM BEING IN THE BOTTOM 10 STATES LAST YEAR

RALEIGH— A report released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation of Baltimore, Md., ranks North Carolina 39th in the nation—an improvement from 41st in 2006—on 10 key indicators of child well-being, including family income, health and education.

“It is encouraging that North Carolina is inching up in the rankings,” said Barbara Bradley, President and CEO of Action for Children North Carolina. “But is also crystal clear that more work remains to be done. More of our babies die before their first birthday than infants in almost any other state. Our child poverty rate is getting worse. As private employers have dropped health insurance, North Carolina has worsened in the percentage of children lacking health care coverage. Looking at some of our most vulnerable children, in 2004, almost 400 children left foster care with no permanent family to help them make the transition to adulthood.”

This year the Annie E. Casey KIDS COUNT Data Book examines our national obligations to those children who are at risk of being removed from their homes, especially the 700,000 American children who spend time in foster care each year. While noting the need to keep children safe, the Casey Foundation calls for an increase to the commitment of connecting children with stable, loving families. Without the benefit of a lasting family, children are unlikely to achieve the outcomes—in health, education, social well-being and preparation for adulthood—that all children need to become productive adults.

“Children absolutely need on-going connections to loving adults,” noted Bradley. “That means we need strong systems in place to help families stay together, services to help families who are in trouble, trained foster parents for bridge services and quick, effective ways to re-unify biological families or promote adoption. The last thing we want is for a child to languish for years in out-of-home care and then turn 18 with no adult around to help in the difficult and critical transition to adulthood. Starting out on your own is hard enough, even when your family is there with you every step of the way.”

1300 Saint Mary's St. · Suite 500 · Raleigh, NC 27605-1276
VOICE 919.834.6623 x 229 · FAX 919.829.7299
E-MAIL admin@ncchild.org · WEBSITE www.ncchild.org

Data show that children in North Carolina are less likely to be removed to foster care than their peers in other states (7 per 1,000 compared to 10 per 1,000 nationally). Nationally and in North Carolina, older children and African-American children are among the most likely to be removed from their homes and spend the most time in out-of-home care.

The Annie E. Casey KIDS COUNT Data Book calls for state and federal policies to improve the situation of foster children, especially older children and children of color. Examples include involving older youth in decisions, promoting kinship care (where relatives care for the children, allowing them to remain attached to their extended families), training in cultural competency for Child Protective Services staff and restructuring federal financing to promote prevention.

Base-year data used in the KIDS COUNT Data Book are from year 2000, with current year data being from year 2004 or 2005. Only Kentucky, Georgia, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia, Arkansas, South Carolina, New Mexico, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi ranked worse than North Carolina.

This is the 18th annual KIDS COUNT Data book from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. It examines key indicators of child well-being across all 50 states and Washington D.C. The indicators presented in the KIDS COUNT Data Book include infant mortality, child and teen deaths, births to teens, teen dropouts and child poverty. The attached chart shows North Carolina's statistics and rankings on each indicator compared to the national average.

Action for Children North Carolina is a leading statewide nonprofit organization based in Raleigh. Since its founding in 1983, Action for Children has been the leading voice for North Carolina's children. Current efforts are focused in major areas: Health, Safety, Early Care, Education, Family Income Issues, Child Maltreatment and Juvenile Justice. Action for Children is the KIDS COUNT partner in North Carolina and the state affiliate of the national organization, Voices for America's Children. For more information, visit www.ncchild.org.

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North Carolina Children – How Do They Compare?

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Indicator	United States	North Carolina	NC Rank
<i>Overall State Rank</i>			39
Low Birth-weight babies (2004)	8.1%	9.0%	39
Infant Mortality (2004)	6.8 per 1,000 births	8.8 per 1,000 births	46
Child Deaths (children aged 1-14) (2004)	20 per 100,000 children	21 per 100,000 children	20
Teen Deaths (teens aged 15-19) (2004)	66 per 100,000 teens	77 per 100,000 teens	34
Births to Girls aged 15-19 (2004)	41 per 1,000	49 per 1,000	37
Teens who are High School Drop Outs (aged 16-19)	7%	9%	36
Teens Not Attending School and Not Working (aged 16-19)	8%	9%	31
Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-time, Year-round Employment	34%	34%	26
Children Living in Poverty	19%	21%	39
Children in Single Parent Families	32%	34%	39
Children Lacking Health Insurance (2003)	11%	12%	39
Percentage of Two Year Olds with Immunizations	83%	89%	3
Children in Low-Income Families (<200% FPL – approx. \$39,000 for a family of four in 2005)	40%	44%	36
Median Income for Families with Children	\$53,000	\$46,000	37
4 th Graders Scoring Below Basic on NAEP Science Assessment (rank out of 44 states)	34%	35%	30
8 th Graders Scoring Below Basic on NAEP Science Assessment (rank out of 44 states)	43%	47%	35
Children who Aged Out of Foster Care Without Having a Permanent Family	22,718	389	N/A

Source: The 2007 Kids Count Data Book from the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore Maryland. Data from 2005 unless otherwise specified.