



## MISSISSIPPI KIDS COUNT

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### **2012 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK Provides More In-Depth Analysis of Mississippi's Children**

(Mississippi State, MS., July 25, 2012) The annual 2012 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation includes a new index that increases the previous ten indicators to sixteen, as a way to offer a more detailed portrait of how U.S. children are faring. Although Mississippi continued to rank 50<sup>th</sup> overall, there was improvement in eight of the 16 indicators.

According to data in the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual KIDS COUNT report, many aspects of child well-being, particularly in the areas of health and education have improved, but key advances in other areas have eroded. Nationally, the overall economic well-being of families has plummeted due to the recession. In 2010, (33%) children lived with parents who lacked full-time, year-round employment. In that same year in Mississippi, 39% of children lived with parents who lacked full-time, year-round employment resulting in 33% of Mississippi's children living in poverty, compared to 22% of children, nationally.

Health indicators for Mississippi revealed an increase in the number of children with health insurance, a decrease in the percentage of children who abuse alcohol or drugs and a decrease in child and teen death rates.

Among education indicators, there were three areas of improvement in Mississippi: the number of children attending preschool, an increase in fourth graders' reading proficiency levels and eighth graders math proficiency. Within the family and community indicators, there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of children living in single-parent households as well as children in families where the head of household lacks a high school diploma. There were no improvements on any of the four indicators in the economic well-being index.

Dr. Linda H. Southward, the Director of Mississippi KIDS COUNT, notes "More than ever, these indicators, point to the need for a two-generation strategy that helps parents move their families ahead economically and improves young children's health, development, and educational success. Mississippi KIDS COUNT, through its own databook and summit showcases successful programs across Mississippi doing just that, yet we continue to have a high percentage of children and families in Mississippi who are struggling."

In addition to the 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 from hundreds of indicators by state, county, city and school district. The complete *Data Book* is available to download as well as geographic profiles and customizable maps, trend lines, and rankings. The KIDS COUNT Mobile Site provides access to all Data Center indicators quickly and easily ([mobile.kidscount.org](http://mobile.kidscount.org)).

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*Mississippi KIDS COUNT* is the leading resource for comprehensive information on Mississippi's children and serves as a catalyst for improving outcomes for children, families, and communities. Funded in part by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, MS KIDS COUNT provides data, statistics and original research about the health, education, safety and economic well-being of the state's children and highlights organizations successfully working to improve outcomes. For more information, visit [www.ssrc.msstate.edu/mskidscount](http://www.ssrc.msstate.edu/mskidscount), Twitter: @mskidscount, and Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/MississippiKidsCount>.