

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **New Report Shows Greater Access to Family Supporting Jobs Needed**

*2007 KidsCount: More families without full-time, year-round jobs, poverty rates still troubling*

**Madison – The Annie E Casey Foundation’s 2007 National Kids Count** book released today shows a troubling increase in the percentage of families and young people without access to opportunities to advancement. The 2007 Kids Count Data Book tracks the well-being of children nationally and state by state with 10 standard measures of well-being. Wisconsin ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the state-by-state study. The report shows four of the state’s ten indicators improving, the five primarily economic indicators growing worse and one remaining the same.

According to KidsCount, the percentage of Wisconsin children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment has increased 11 percent between 2000 and 2005. “Wisconsin is a hard working state, with the vast majority of kids having all parents in the workforce. However, many families, even though they are working several jobs, can’t make enough to lift their families out of poverty.” says Charity Eleson, executive director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

The number of Wisconsin children living in poverty (annual income under \$19,806 for a family of four) has gotten significantly worse since 2000, with a 17 percent increase over that time. That percentage has remained unchanged at 14 percent since 2003.

“Poverty and extreme poverty continue to plague Wisconsin - half of the children living in poverty are living in extreme poverty; meaning that the annual income of their family is less \$10,000 annually. We need to be bold as a state to move these numbers,” said Eleson. “That percentage has changed very little in the last several years, which is a call to all of us to support policies that will help increase family income and earnings potential.”

Concrete state policy changes that could put more money in working families’ pockets in the short term include increasing participation in the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Homestead Tax Credit. In addition, investments in educational opportunities for working adults at technical colleges and university campuses are a way to improve the relatively stagnant child poverty numbers. “Indexing the minimum wage to inflation, improving tax credits for low income working adults, and improving access to education and training for adults would all make a significant difference in family economics in our state,” said Eleson.

The 2007 book also reports an increasing percentage of youth ages 16 to 19 that are not working and not attending school. Research confirms that post secondary education is necessary to advance into positions that pay family supporting wages. While still below the national rate, Wisconsin saw a 17 percent increase in the percentage of kids not in school or working. According to Eleson, “Providing young

people with the opportunity to see value in continuing their education is critical to their future and the future of their children. These numbers point to the need to develop pathways for at-risk kids to succeed in school and help them discover employment and training options that may not involve a more traditional 4-year college degree.”

***Other Highlights of the 2007 KidsCount Report Include:***

***Increased Diversity***

KidsCount reports a 14 percent increase in children in immigrant families between 2000 and 2005. And the diversity of Wisconsin’s children is changing significantly. In 1990, just over one child in eight was a non-white; in 2005 almost a quarter of the child population (23 percent) was non-white.

In 2005 in Wisconsin, 23 percent of children are of color, while the population as a whole is 15 percent non-white. Says Eleson, “the growing diversity of the state enriches all of us, and policy makers must keep an eye toward creating opportunity for all kids and families.”

***Health Care:***

The number of Wisconsin children without health insurance has increased in recent years after a significant decline in the number of uninsured following the implementation of BadgerCare in 1999.

“We know that a large number of uninsured children qualify for BadgerCare,” said Jon Peacock, research director for WCCF. He pointed to statistics showing that most uninsured people in Wisconsin are in low income households, with 61 percent having an annual income below 200% of poverty (\$34,340 for a family of three in 2007).

“That problem should be reduced significantly by provisions in BadgerCare Plus simplifying the application process and establishing a presumption that every child in Wisconsin qualifies for health insurance. Children who have access to health care are more prepared for school and visit the emergency room far less for common childhood illnesses that have become acute,” Peacock added.

***The report details improvements in the following areas of Child Safety:***

- Infant Mortality – Rates have improved slightly over 2000, from 6.6 to 6.0 per 1,000 (9 percent).
- Child Death Rate – The child death rate improved by 15 percent between 2000 and 2004.
- Teen Death Rate - In 2000 there were 66 teen deaths per 100,000 teens, and in 2005 that number dropped to 57 per 100,000.
- Teen Birth Rate - Fewer Wisconsin teens are having children, which continues the trend of the first part of the 1990’s and this decade. Between 2000 and 2004, the rate of births to teen mothers dropped 14 percent from 35 per 1,000 to 30 per 1,000 (females between 15 and 19 years old).

To view the full 2007 Kids Count national book visit: [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)

For more information on the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families visit: [www.wccf.org](http://www.wccf.org)

***The Annie E Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization, whose primary mission is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today’s vulnerable children and families.***

***Wisconsin Council on Children and Families: Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count***

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