



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON

**children  
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count

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## **Wisconsin's Children Gaining Ground in Some Respects, Losing in Others** State's Overall *Kids Count* Ranking Unchanged from 2009

Since 2000, Wisconsin has improved on five of the 10 key measures of child well-being included in the **2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book**, a state-by-state analysis published each year by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Wisconsin's ranked 10<sup>th</sup> best overall among the states in this year's report, the same as a decade ago and the same as last year.

Wisconsin ranked among the top 10 states on four of the 10 indicators covered in this year's *Data Book*. Wisconsin's percentage of teens who are neither in school nor working is one of the lowest in the country, at 5% (5<sup>th</sup> best in the nation). Wisconsin also scored well on percentage of children whose parents do not have secure employment, ranking 7<sup>th</sup> best in the country at 22%.

On three of the indicators included in the book, however, Wisconsin kids scored worse than in 2000. In 2007, 7.0% of the babies born in Wisconsin were of low birthweight, up from 6.5% in 2000, and the state's ranking on this measure dropped from 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>. And while the state's child death rate for kids ages 1 to 14 improved from 20 per thousand in 2000 to 19 per thousand in 2007, we lost ground to other states; Wisconsin's rank dropped from 8<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> on that measure.

"Wisconsin remains a great place for kids to grow up, but it's important to recognize that this does not happen by magic," said Ken Taylor, executive director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF). "It happens because people here understand the importance of investing in things like health care coverage and high-quality early childhood education.

"We must continually remind policymakers that Wisconsin didn't become a leader in child care, health care, and youth engagement by accident. It took a longstanding commitment to improving outcomes by making smart investments based on the best available research about what works."

"Now our challenge is to apply that approach more effectively in the areas where we need improvement, without letting up in those areas where we've already seen some success" Taylor added. "It's nice to read headlines about being in the top ten, but there are thousands of children in Wisconsin who are being left behind and there is a great deal of room for improvement in *every* area, including those in which we compare favorably to other states."

The 2010 *Data Book* is based on data from 2007 and 2008, primarily the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 American Community Survey (ACS). While this is the most recent data available for many of the measures, it does not capture the impact of the recent severe recession. In addition to the data included in the **2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book**, information on hundreds of other measures

of child well-being is available via the Kids Count Data Center, which offers tools for creating maps and graphs of the data at the national, state, county and city levels. The Data Center's Wisconsin data is available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/wi>. It can also be accessed via the WCCF website at [http://www.wccf.org/kidcount\\_data.php](http://www.wccf.org/kidcount_data.php).

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