



NEWS RELEASE

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The Texas Kids Non-Miracle

New report shows Texas once again near the bottom in key indicators of child health and well-being

(AUSTIN, Texas) — According to data released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in its 2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book, Texas ranks 35th in key indicators of child health and well-being.

Table with 2 columns: Year, Overall Texas Rank. Rows from 2002 to 2011 showing ranks from 36th to 35th.

And this is just the latest ranking in the bottom third for Texas in the state-by-state study of our children’s well-being. Over the last decade, Texas has ranked no higher than 34th nationally and as low as 39th in the overall well-being of our kids.

“Every night my five-year-old daughter wants me to read her a story,” says Frances Deviney, Ph.D., director of Texas KIDS COUNT. “And after hearing the same story a couple of times, she is ready for a new one. Texas should be ready for a new story about our children’s health and well-being.”

Over the past decade, 2.4 million more U.S. kids fell into poverty, and one of every six of those kids are Texans. Of the total number of children who live in poverty in the U.S., one out of every nine (11 percent) calls Texas home.

The Data Book shows some improvements for teens, while conditions deteriorated for infants and kids overall:

Texas continues to have a child poverty rate well above the rest of the U. S. with 24 percent or one in four Texas kids living in poverty, and a 13 percent increase in the number of kids living in single-parent families.

For the second consecutive year, Texas had the third highest teen birth rate in the nation. Texas also saw a 14 percent increase in the number of babies born at low birth weights, and an 11 percent increase in the number of infant deaths since 2000.

Texas experienced a 13 and 17 percent decline in the number of child and teen deaths respectively, and a 50 percent decrease in the number of high school dropouts.

There are two new indicators in this year’s Data Book—the number of children affected by foreclosure and households with at least one unemployed parent. In Texas, 281,000, or 3 percent, of the state’s children were affected by foreclosure since 2007. In 2010, an estimated 2 million or 30 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.

(more)



“We all have pride in our state and fight to make it better,” says Deviney. “We must begin making smart decisions today and preparing our kids for a better tomorrow. We must begin to write a new story for our kids in Texas.”

— CPPP —

About CPPP

The Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy institute committed to improving public policies to better the economic and social conditions of low- and moderate-income Texans. CPPP is home to the Texas KIDS COUNT project.

For more state- and county-specific data on the well-being of Texas children, look for the release of the Texas KIDS COUNT Annual Data Book in early 2012. To learn more, visit <http://www.cppp.org/kidscount> . For additional information, please contact [Dr. Frances Deviney](#) at 512-320-0222, ext. 106.

You can learn more about CPPP at <http://www.cppp.org>. Join us across the Web on Twitter @CPPP_TX, on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/bettertexas> , and on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/CPPPvideo>.

About the Data Book

The data described in the book aims to show the importance of tracking indicators of child well-being. The 21st annual Data Book is produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and is also complemented by an online Data Center containing hundreds of measures of child well-being at the national, state, county and city level. To access information for Texas, go to <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.

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