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New Information from the 2008 KIDS COUNT Data Book
A Look at Well-Being and Opportunities for Kentucky's Kids

A Project of
The Annie E. Casey
Foundation

Kentucky ranks 41st in the nation in a new state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children. The 2008 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* reveals that Kentucky improved on four of the 10 measures affecting child well-being and experienced six setbacks since 2000.

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The 2008 Essay discusses youth who are involved in state juvenile justice systems and highlights new approaches to detention reform, such as the Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). The essay challenges local and state-level institutions to reduce unnecessary and inappropriate detention and incarceration. In addition, increased opportunities for positive youth development are encouraged.

Nearly three out of four Kentucky youth in custody are confined due to non-violent offenses.

In 2006, the estimated count of detained and committed Kentucky youth in custody was 1,242. Of these youth, 72 percent were in custody due to non-violent offenses in comparison to the nation at 66 percent.

Kentucky ranks in bottom ten on four out of ten indicators.

Kentucky ranks 41st in the percentage of teens who are high school dropouts and children living in poverty, 43rd in the percentage of teens not attending school and not working, and 45th in the percentage of children living in families with unstable employment.

Percentage of low-birthweight babies increases.

The percentage of low-birthweight babies in Kentucky increased by 11 percent, from 8.2 percent in 2000 to 9.1 percent in 2005. The national rate of low-birthweight babies increased by 8 percent, from 7.6 percent to 8.2 percent during the same period.

Infant mortality rate improves in Kentucky, while stagnant nationally.

Between 2000 and 2005, Kentucky's infant mortality rate improved by 8 percent, from 7.2 deaths per 1,000 live births to 6.6 deaths per 1,000 live births. The nation saw no change at 6.9 percent during the same period.

More Kentucky children living in poverty.

The percentage of Kentucky children living in poverty increased by 5 percent from 22 percent in 2000 to 23 percent in 2006. Kentucky ranks 41st in the nation on this indicator.