



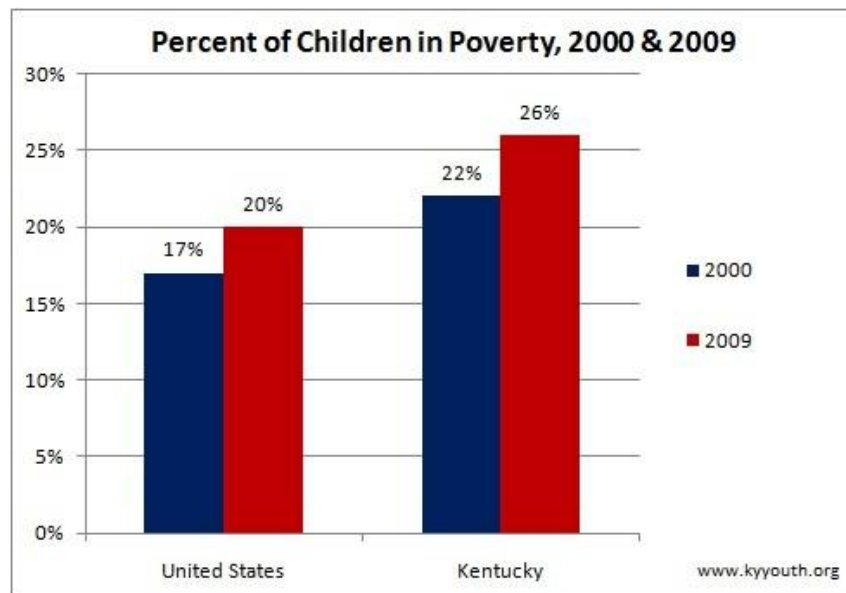
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KENTUCKY 41ST IN KIDS COUNT RANKING OF CHILD WELL-BEING 2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book Reveals the Recession Has Wiped Out Earlier Gains in Fighting Poverty

Jeffersontown, KY – Kentucky remains one of the bottom 10 states in the nation for over-all child well-being with an overall rank of 41, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's [2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book](#). The annual publication uses the best available data on ten key indicators to gauge the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children in each state.

The 2011 Data Book reports an 18 percent increase in the U.S. child poverty rate between 2000 and 2009. This increase means that 2.5 million more American children are living below the federal poverty line (\$21,756 for a family of two adults and two children), and the gains made on this important measure in the late 1990's have been effectively wiped out. In Kentucky, the percent of children in poverty increased from 22 percent to 26 percent between 2000 and 2009, moving Kentucky's rank on this indicator from 43rd to 48th.

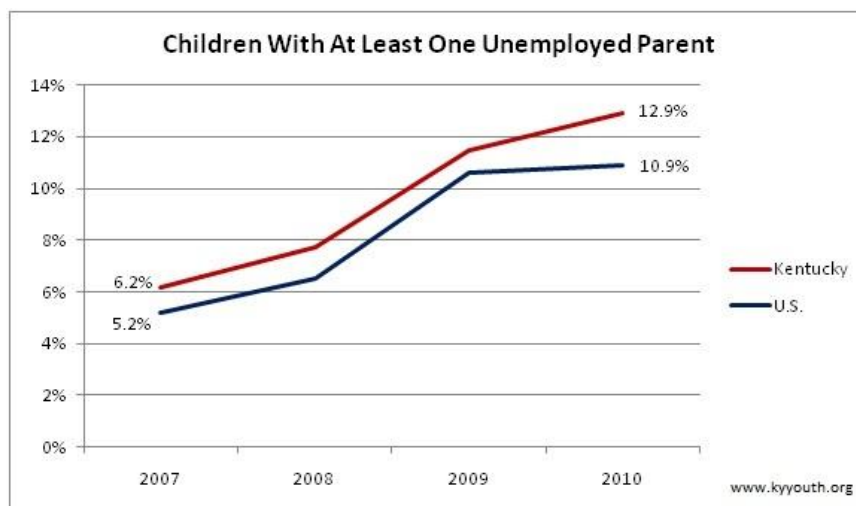


“The data mean that more than one in four Kentucky kids live in poverty. This increasing number of children living in poverty is troubling for the present and the future. This is not some arcane

issue but it should sound an alarm bell in every office in Frankfort. The current economic realities point to the very real hardships that children and families face today. Sadly, that same economic landscape is a reliable predictor of tomorrow's problems in a variety of arenas, ranging from health and wellness to education and child protection," said Terry Brooks, Executive Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates.

The Data Book reveals Kentucky improved on four indicators since 2000. The percent of teens ages 16-19 not in school and not high school graduates dropped by 30 percent from 2000 to 2009. Following national trends, child death, teen death, and infant mortality rates also dropped in Kentucky. Conditions for Kentucky's children worsened on four of the indicators: low birthweight babies, children in single-parent families, children in poverty, and children under 18 without secure parental employment (full-time, year-round work). In just one year, (from 2008 to 2009) the percent of children under 18 without secure parental employment increased from 33 percent to 38 percent. Conditions remained relatively unchanged for two indicators: teen births and the number of teens ages 16-19 not in school and not working.

Two additional economic well-being indicators were included in the book this year to show how the recession has affected children: children with at least one unemployed parent and children affected by foreclosures. In Kentucky, 38,000, or 2.3 percent, of the state's children were impacted by foreclosures from 2007 to 2009. Kentucky fares well when compared to other states, only fourteen states had percentages lower than Kentucky's. However, Kentucky has one of the highest rates in the nation of children with at least one unemployed parent -- only four states and the District of Columbia have rates higher than Kentucky. In 2010, an estimated 122,000 children (12.9 percent) in the commonwealth lived in households where there was at least one parent available and actively seeking employment, but was unemployed at the time the data were collected.



“The lingering effects of the recession call for action rather than finger-pointing in Frankfort and Washington. Certainly, policymakers at all levels of government simply must help struggling families make ends meet by preserving and strengthening existing programs, including unemployment benefits, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program,” said Brooks. “At the state level, opportunities abound to make a difference in ways that are effective and are sensitive to budgetary constraints. For instance, increasing access for eligible Kentuckians to benefits and initiating a state-level Earned Income Tax Credit are proven ways to lift low-income families out of poverty and to simultaneously put real dollars into the marketplace where these folks work and live. Those are the kinds of win-win situations that we need to pursue in 2012.”

The 2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book and Kentucky State Profile is available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/DataBook/2011/Default.aspx>. For interactive Kentucky KIDS COUNT data, visit <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/StateLanding.aspx?state=KY>.

This coming November, Kentucky Youth Advocates will release the 2011 Kentucky KIDS COUNT County Data Book. The 21st edition of the County Data Book will provide updated data at the state and county level on indicators of childhood health including: adequate prenatal care, preterm births, low birthweight births, mothers smoking during pregnancy, breastfeeding rates, births to teenagers, public health insurance usage, childhood obesity, hospitalizations due to asthma, and availability of recreational facilities.

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***[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.*

***[Kentucky Youth Advocates](#)** is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*