



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Child Well-Being Improved Nationally; Decreased in New Mexico** New KIDS COUNT Report ranks NM in bottom 10 from 2000-2005

ALBUQUERQUE—A new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows that things got worse for New Mexico's children between 2000 and 2005, despite the fact that things improved for children nationally. The report, **Ranking States on Improvement in Child Well-Being Since 2000: KIDS COUNT**, takes a look at how child well-being has improved or deteriorated in each of the 50 states. The report shows that, nationally, children's well-being improved by 5 percent between 2000 and 2005, but the well-being of New Mexico's children actually declined by 2 percentage points during that time frame.

"This new report highlights what the annual KIDS COUNT data book has been telling us for years – that New Mexico needs to make kids more of a priority," said Lisa Adams-Shafer, who runs New Mexico's KIDS COUNT program.

This report differs somewhat from the annual KIDS COUNT data book the Casey Foundation has been releasing since 1990. While both the annual book and this new report use the same ten indicators of child well-being (such as poverty rates, educational attainment, and teen pregnancy rates), the annual book ranks states against one another, so it shows how each state is doing in relation to the others. Year-over-year changes in a state's ranking reflect overall changes in child well-being for that state *only in comparison* to the other 49. In other words, even if a state's rank improves over time, it doesn't mean there was absolute improvement in child well-being in that state.

The annual data book has ranked New Mexico in the bottom ten every year since 1990, and in the bottom five every year since 1998.

"Our state leaders need to be investing in – not cutting – policies and programs that address some of these deficiencies," said Bill Jordan, Policy Director for New Mexico Voices for Children, which runs the state KIDS COUNT program.

The new report states that the overall national increase in child well-being from 2000 to 2005 was due mostly to improvements in high school dropout and teen pregnancy rates.

The new report is available online at

<http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid=%7b020D2DF3-680D-40A6-A290-817FA0ED9C41%7d>

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.

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