Children’s Economic Well-Being Continues to Suffer Since the Recession

Each year, the Annie E. Casey Foundation releases the KIDS COUNT Data Book, a report that assesses child well-being using an index of 16 indicators. The report ranks each of the 50 states on these indicators organized into 4 domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. In particular, the Data Book focuses on children within the context of the United States’ post-recession economic recovery. The report presents a comparison of data from 2008 and data from 2013 (the most recently available) to assess how children have fared since the economic crisis.

In general, children saw improvements in the education and health domains, but setbacks in economic well-being and family and community indicators. After increasing annually since 2008, the child poverty rate declined slightly in 2013, according to the report. However, the 2013 rate of 22 percent is still higher than before the recession. The rate of children whose parents lack secure employment was also worse in 2013 than 2008. The rate of children living in high-poverty areas worsened as well. On the other hand, the rate of children in households with a high housing cost burden declined in 2013 compared to 2008.

Native American, African American and Hispanic children fared worse than the national average across numerous indicators. Notably, Native Americans had the highest rate of children whose parents lack secure employment (50 percent) and African Americans were not far behind (48 percent). Half of African American children and 47 percent of Hispanic children live in households with a high housing cost burden, compared to the national average of 36 percent. All three groups had higher rates of children in poverty than the national average.
The results of the state by state analysis varied. Many of the lowest ranking states were in the Southeast, Southwest, and Appalachia. For example, the rate of child poverty for 2013 was lowest in New Hampshire, at 10 percent, and highest in Mississippi, at 34 percent. Mississippi also had the highest rate of children in families without secure parental employment, and the highest rate of children living in high-poverty areas. In terms of overall child well-being, the three lowest-ranked states were Louisiana, New Mexico, and Mississippi.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Download the Kids Count Data Book [here].

Additional HAC Resources on Poverty

Access data on for your community at HAC’s Rural Data Portal: www.ruraldataportal.org