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

A Project of  
The Annie E. Casey  
Foundation

Louisiana ranks 49<sup>th</sup> 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 Louisiana improved on two of the 10 measures affecting child well-being, experienced seven setbacks, and saw no change in one 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 Alternative 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.

**Louisiana's rate of detained and committed youth in custody exceeds the national rate.**

In 2006, the rate of detained and committed Louisiana youth in custody was 149 per 100,000 youth ages 10-15 in comparison to the national rate of 125 per 100,000 youth. That year, the state's estimated daily count of detained and committed youth in custody was 1,200. Approximately 67 percent of all youth in custody were in custody due to a non-violent offense.

**Louisiana placed in the bottom ten nationally in nine out of ten categories.**

Nationally, Louisiana ranked within the bottom ten in nearly all categories, aside from its teen birth rate. The state had the worst rate of child deaths, percentage of high school dropouts, and percentage of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment.

**Teen birth rate improves.**

Between 2000 and 2005, Louisiana's teen birth rate improved by 21 percent, dropping from 62 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19 to 49 births per 1,000 females. The state ranked 38<sup>th</sup> in the nation on this indicator.

**Child death rate increases in contrast to national trend.**

Louisiana's child death rate worsened by 6 percent, increasing from 32 deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14 in 2000 to 34 deaths per 100,000 children in 2005. In contrast, the national rate improved by 9 percent from 22 to 20 deaths per 100,000 children in the same period.