



UNDER EMBARGO

Until 12:01 AM EDT

October 24, 2017

tfalgoust@agendaforchildren.org

CONTACT: Teresa Falgoust

(504) 586-8509

Louisiana Must Improve Well-Being for Children of Color and Children in Immigrant Families

2017 Race for Results Report Shows Persistent Inequities in Services, Opportunities for Children of Color

New Orleans — Louisiana's future prosperity and ability to compete with other states depends on ensuring opportunities for our children and young adults today. Yet, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *2017 Race for Results: Building a Path to Opportunity for All Children* report reveals that, for far too many children of color, living in Louisiana means facing more challenges than children in other states, from being born at low birthweight to living in high-poverty neighborhoods.

While the *Race for Results* report documents many troubling disparities in outcomes for children in the state, access to early childhood education was a bright spot for Louisiana's children. Asian children have the highest rate of attendance, with 65 percent of young Asian children enrolled in preschool or nursery school or kindergarten. A similar proportion of African-American children (64 percent) and white children (63 percent) attended an early childhood program. While enrollment was somewhat lower among Latino children (61 percent), Louisiana's rate for Latino children was the fifth-highest of any state.

"We have the opportunity to transform our state by helping children get the right start," said Dr. Anthony Recasner, CEO of Agenda for Children. "By making strategic investments in our people's health and education now, we can create a Louisiana that is economically competitive and provides opportunities for all of its residents."

The Casey Foundation's 2017 report is the second edition of the *Race for Results* report, which was first published in 2014. The ongoing series reflects the Foundation's commitment to examining data and offering data-informed policy recommendations on issues of racial and ethnic equity. *Race for Results* measures children's progress on the national and state levels on key education, health and economic milestones by racial and ethnic groups. The report's index uses a composite score of these milestones on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 1,000 (highest) to make comparisons. This allows readers to not only compare outcomes for children of various races and ethnicities within Louisiana, but also see how Louisiana compares to other states and the nation.

The *Race for Results* index shows persistent disparities in Louisiana between African-American (276) and Latino children (466) compared to Asian (729) and White children (625). It also captures disparities *between* states in child outcomes; of 44 states with sufficient data on African-American children, Louisiana tied with Ohio for the second-worst index score. Louisiana tied with Tennessee for 42nd (of 50 states) for its index score for white children. While Louisiana's ranking for Latino children was better (15th of 49 states), the state's score (466) shows that it still has significant room for improvement.

The report also includes a range of education indicators, including measures of educational attainment and workforce participation among young adults. Overall, less than one-third of Louisiana

young adults (ages 25-29) have at least an associate's degree, and the rates varied widely by race and ethnicity. Degree attainment for Latino young adults in Louisiana, at 22 percent, was exactly the same as the national rate. Among Asian-Americans, the rate in Louisiana (66 percent) was slightly below the national average (68 percent). However, just 18% of African-Americans ages 25-29 in Louisiana have at least an associate's degree, compared to 27% of their peers nationwide. Among white young adults, the gap between Louisiana and the nation was even wider-38% of white Louisianans ages 25-29 have a degree, compared to the national average of 48%.

“Over the past decade, our state has dealt with structural deficits in our state budget by making deep cuts to programs that are critical to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty in Louisiana,” said Teresa Falgoust, KIDS COUNT Coordinator at Agenda for Children. “Our decisions to cut funding for higher education and family-focused programs, such as Child Care Assistance, will only serve to deepen many of the inequities documented in this report. As our policymakers work to create a balanced approach to the budget, it's vital that they consider what children and families need in order to ensure our state's long-term prosperity.”

This year's report includes a special focus on children in immigrant families. Close to 74,000 children in Louisiana have at least one parent who is an immigrant. While immigrant children in Louisiana are more likely to face some challenges, such as living with a householder who lacks a high school diploma, they are also far more likely to live in two-parent households. While 56 percent of Louisiana children in U.S. born families live in two-parent households, the same is true for 80 percent of children in immigrant families.

The Race for Results report makes three recommendations to help ensure all children and their families are afforded opportunities to reach their full potential:

- **Keep families together and in their communities** — Helping to keep children with their families enables them to meet developmental milestones and for parents to meet the needs of their children.
- **Help children in immigrant families meet key developmental milestones** — The overall well-being of children is key to our nation's future and is influenced by their environments. We can and must choose policies that make those environments more supportive and healthy.
- **Increase economic opportunity for immigrant parents** — Meaningful programs and policies that improve opportunities for low-income workers and deal with the needs of parents and their children save taxpayers by reducing the costs of safety-net programs.

Release Information

The 2017 *Race for Results* report will be available October 24 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org/raceforresults/. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org/. The website also contains the most recent national, state and local data on numerous indicators of child well-being. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about *Race for Results* can use the Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

About Agenda for Children

Agenda for Children, a private non-profit organization, works to make Louisiana a state in which all children can thrive. Visit www.agendaforchildren.org to learn more.

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. KIDS COUNT is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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