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New Report Highlights the Impact Poverty Has on Children, Families, and Communities

Lawmakers should reprioritize investments and focus on alleviating poverty

(Madison, WI) —A new KIDS COUNT report from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families draws attention to the impact poverty has on children and families. The report also highlights a number of policies and programs that lawmakers could implement that would greatly reduce poverty—and save the state money in the long-term by reducing reliance on social programs and increasing economic productivity.

According to the report, Wisconsin had a child poverty rate of 16.4%, meaning that nearly 1 in 6 children in the state is growing up poor. In addition, the report finds that Black, Latino, Native American, and Asian children all have poverty rates well above the national average. In fact, Wisconsin’s poverty rate for Black children, 34%, is among the highest in the country.

WI poverty rates for children of color compare unfavorable to national average		
Share of children in poverty in 2015, by race and ethnicity		
Race/Ethnicity	Wisconsin	U.S.
American Indian	41%	34%
Asian and Pacific Islander	16%	13%
Black or African American	44%	36%
Hispanic or Latino	33%	31%
Non-Hispanic White	10%	12%

Source: Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Center

Ken Taylor, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, believes that reprioritizing investments and focusing on supporting both children and parents is key to reducing poverty in Wisconsin.

“The success of children is dependent on the success of their parents,” said Taylor. “That means we need to do a better job ensuring that parents are able to secure a job with family-supporting wages, that work force development is available to those interested in furthering their skills, and that all parents have paid family leave—so they can care for their children when their children need it most.”

The report outlines three critical components to ending childhood poverty:

- Providing parents with pathways and support to earn family-supporting wages.
- Providing children, especially poor children, with high quality early childhood education to ensure they are kindergarten ready.
- Supporting parents so they can support and care for their children.

With the state budget process approaching and with improved revenue projections, now is the perfect time to for lawmakers to be thinking about what investments can be made that would alleviate poverty in Wisconsin.

“Lawmakers have a real opportunity to show that children are a priority and that every child in Wisconsin deserves the opportunity to thrive,” said Taylor. “Working to reduce poverty is not only the moral thing to do—it’s the fiscally responsible thing to do. Investing today will reap huge savings for our state and for taxpayers in the future.”

The full report, [“Increasing Economic Security for Every Wisconsin Family” can be downloaded here.](#)

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The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families is a multi-issue policy research and advocacy organization promoting statewide policies that ensure a safe and health future for every child in Wisconsin. For more information, visit www.wccf.org.

A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT is the premier source for data on child and family well-being in the United States. Access hundreds of indicators, download data and create reports and graphics on the KIDS COUNT Data Center that support smart decisions about children and families.