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New Report Shows Benefits of Two-Generation Strategies Could Help More than One Million Low-income Texas Families

Texas would especially benefit from coordinated approaches to connect low-income families with early childhood education and job training

AUSTIN, Texas – More than 1 in 10 American low-income families with young children live in Texas, according to a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and innovative approaches that support parents and children simultaneously could prove especially beneficial in the Lone Star State. Nationally, almost half the nation's families with young children live in low-income homes. Research shows that high-quality early childhood education and parallel job training for parents can pave a pathway out of poverty for these families.

"There are more than one million low-income families with young children in Texas, ranking second only to California," said Ann Beeson, executive director of the Center for Public Policy Priorities in Austin. "Today's children will become tomorrow's workers and leaders, and the state must invest in education for children and job training for adults so that Texans of all backgrounds can reach their full potential."

The KIDS COUNT® policy report, *Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach*, outlines how the public, nonprofit and private sectors must work together to reduce poverty among the 10 million low-income families with young children in the United States. The recommendations propose integrating state and federal employment, education and child care programs for parents and children to create better opportunities for the entire family.

Key findings:

- For 43 percent of Texas low-income families with young children, neither parent has a full-time job. In 85 percent of low-income families, neither parent has an associate's degree, which dramatically highlights the need to equip parents who have limited education with skills that can help them earn a family-supporting income.
- More than a third of Texas children age five or younger in low-income families have parents with concerns about their development.
- Nationwide, 45 percent of low-income families with young children (age eight or younger) are headed by single parents, compared with 17 percent of middle- and upper-income families.

Key recommendations:

- Create policies that equip parents and children with the income, tools and skills they need to succeed — as a family and as individuals.
- Put common sense into common practice by structuring public systems to respond to the realities facing today's families.
- Use existing child, adult and neighborhood programs and platforms to build evidence for practical pathways out of poverty for entire families.

Jeremiah Program is an example of a new two-generational model in Texas. The organization provides single mothers and their children with support for a career-track college education, quality early childhood education, a safe and affordable place to live, and empowerment and life skills training. In early 2015, Jeremiah Program will break ground on a campus to serve 35 families in the Guadalupe-Saldaña Net-Zero Subdivision in East Austin.

"We hope this report will spark deep commitment in Washington and in board rooms across the country to remove the obstacles that prevent millions of families from putting their kids on a path to success," said Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of the Casey Foundation. "For too long, our approach to poverty has focused separately on children and adults, instead of their interrelated needs. We've learned a lot about what works in separate areas, but we're not combining these lessons to break the cycle of poverty."

The full report, *Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach*, is available at www.aecf.org.

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The Center for Public Policy Priorities is an independent public policy organization that uses data and analysis to advocate for solutions that enable Texans of all backgrounds to reach their full potential. We dare Texas to be the best state for hard-working people and their families.

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.