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Contact: Oliver Bernstein, bernstein@cppp.org, 512.289.8618

Texas Child Poverty – Historical and Current Policies Mean Wide Disparities across Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Location

State of Texas Children 2016 report finds wide-ranging racial and ethnic disparities in children's health, education and financial security that demand common sense policy solutions

DALLAS – Historical and current policies have created and maintained unequal opportunities and large disparities in child poverty across race, ethnicity and gender, according to *State of Texas Children 2016*, a new Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) statewide report released here today. Notably, 1.7 million Texas children (or 25 percent of all Texas children) live in poverty. Of those children in poverty, 1.1 million are Latino, 277,000 are Black, 241,000 are White, and 31,000 are Asian. But the poverty rates tell a different story. Poverty rates for Latino (33 percent) and Black children (32 percent) are nearly three times higher than they are for White (11 percent) and Asian children (12 percent).

Read the new report here.

Detailed data are available for every county in Texas. Please contact kidscount@cppp.org or visit datacenter.kidscount.org for child well-being data for your county.

"As the state's economy and population grow, the future of Texas depends on the health, education and financial security of all our children—across gender, neighborhood, income, race and ethnicity," said CPPP Executive Director Ann Beeson. "Looking deep into the data, we found that too many children in Texas today continue to face tremendous barriers to opportunity because of the color of their skin."

By 2050, the Texas child population is projected to be 61 percent Hispanic, 22 percent White, nine percent Black, and eight percent Asian, multiracial or some other race. Closing the educational, health and financial gaps between Texas kids from different backgrounds will require intentionally breaking down any obstacles to certain groups of children reaching their full potential. According to the report, with almost one in 10 U.S. kids living in Texas, the future of young Texans will determine the future of our country.

CPPP released the report at a daylong event in Dallas featuring County Judge Clay Jenkins, over 200 community members and a performance by Dallas-based Big Thought. Additional community events around the report will take place in San Antonio (May 11) and Fort Worth (May 25), with additional dates to follow.

CPPP simultaneously released a companion, Dallas-area snapshot about child well-being specifically in the Dallas area.

Key findings include:

- One-third (2.3 million) of Texas kids live with one or more parents who immigrated to the U.S., and 96 percent of all Texas kids are U.S. citizens. Children who live with immigrant parents represent a diverse and complex group and are future workers and leaders in Texas.

- Food insecurity – a lack of consistent access to enough food for a healthy diet – is more likely to occur in an area with little economic growth. Food insecurity affects 38 percent of Black children in Texas — a rate more than twice as high as for White children.
- Black and Latino students are underrepresented in Advanced Placement math, science and technology courses. Girls are underrepresented in some STEM courses and high-paying fields.
- Black and Hispanic students are more likely to attend high-poverty school districts, which tend to have worse access to effective teachers. Forty-two percent of Hispanic students are enrolled in high-poverty school districts, compared to six percent of White students. Students in high-poverty school districts typically need extra supports but may not get them because of disparities in school funding. Funding comes from local property taxes that are generated based on the value of property within school districts.
- Child uninsured rates continue to improve for all racial and ethnic groups, but gaps still remain. Texas has one of the highest uninsured rates for Latino children (15 percent) and for children overall (11 percent).

Key policy recommendations:

- Collect and analyze data by race and ethnicity whenever possible.
- Create partnerships between schools, workforce development programs and businesses to promote pathways out of poverty and better support for families.
- Expand access to school-based child nutrition programs, such as Afterschool Meals, Summer Nutrition and School Breakfast.
- Make gender and racial equity priorities within STEM courses.
- Increase access to affordable health insurance for underserved families.
- Increase state funding and funding equity for school districts, and make equity a priority within the classroom.

"Lawmakers have a tremendous opportunity to adopt targeted solutions that can significantly improve outcomes for all Texans," said CPPP research associate and report author Jennifer Lee. "From analyzing data by race and ethnicity whenever possible to helping craft state and local policies, to expanding nutrition and healthcare programs, common sense solutions are available to lawmakers now that can improve the state of Texas children."

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The State of Texas Children report is part of the Kids Count project, a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S. funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Check out the Kids Count Data Center for extensive child well-being data for each of Texas' 254 counties and seven largest metropolitan areas. Visit datacenter.kidscount.org.

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