

KIDS COUNT Data Book to include information on children in Puerto Rico ^[1]

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San Juan, Puerto Rico – The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., today joined with the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) to announce that this year's national KIDS COUNT Data Book will include data on children living in Puerto Rico, a first for the acclaimed book which has been published since 1990. The data show that children in Puerto Rico face higher levels of risk on nine of ten key indicators of child well-being. "The KIDS COUNT Data Book is the gold standard for all those interested in data on the status of children in this country. The inclusion of Puerto Rico not only is a welcome and much-needed addition, but also will ensure that the urgent needs of Puerto Rico's children are taken more fully into account," stated Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO. Among the report's findings: In 2005, there were an estimated one million children in Puerto Rico. This represents a larger child population than that of about half the states in the United States. The child poverty rate (55%) in Puerto Rico was nearly three times that of the U.S. (19%) as a whole in 2005. The child poverty rate is defined as the percentage of children living in families whose annual incomes fall below \$19,806 for a family of two children and two adults. The percentage of low birth weight babies (11.5%) and the share of babies born to teen mothers (62 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19) are higher than the U.S. overall average. The rate of deaths among children ages 1-14 in Puerto Rico (17 per 100,000) is slightly lower than the national rate (20 per 100,000). NCLR has housed the KIDS COUNT – Puerto Rico Project for the last five years and has contributed to reducing the information gap by publishing several reports, providing information free of charge through an online database, and engaging in multiple initiatives regarding children on the Island. "KIDS COUNT provides a great opportunity to raise awareness, shape policy, and discuss current social policy concerns based on solid information in order to help improve the lives of families," concluded Murguía. For more information, please visit kidscount.nclr.org. Contact: Nayda I. Rivera-Hernández (787) 641-0546 ext. 11 nrivera@nclr.org

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