

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

MEDIA ADVISORY
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Latest Online Report Tracks U.S. Birth Information Across States and 50 Largest Cities

*Now Includes National-Level Birth Outcomes by Race and Ethnicity of Mother,
State and City Data on Births to Foreign-Born Mothers Each Year Since 1990*

BALTIMORE – The online report, *The Right Start for America's Newborns: City and State Trends*, has been updated to include 2004 data, adding to the birth information the report has tracked annually since 1990. Nationally, only one of the eight measures tracked in *The Right Start* (mothers who smoke during pregnancy) showed a clear improvement between 2003 and 2004, while five showed outcomes worsening, and two stayed relatively unchanged. Nationally, the percentages of low birthweight and preterm births have both been steadily increasing since 1990. The report does however show that data trends differ dramatically among cities and states.

The 2007 *Right Start for America's Newborns* includes two new data items. First, it includes national level data on birth outcomes by the race and ethnicity of the mother every year since 1990. This new data shows that for nearly all birth outcomes measured, babies born to White non-Hispanic mothers fare better than babies born to Hispanic mothers and Black non-Hispanic mothers. One exception is the percent of births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy. White, non-Hispanic mothers who gave birth in 2004 were more likely to have smoked during pregnancy than mothers of the other races included in the study. In 2004, 13.8% of babies born to White, non-Hispanic mothers were born to mothers who smoked during pregnancy compared to 8.4% of Black, non Hispanic mothers, and 2.6% of Hispanic mothers. In addition, babies born to Hispanic mothers were slightly less likely than babies born to white, non Hispanic mothers to be of low birthweight (6.8% v. 7.2%).

Second, this year's report includes, for the first time, the percent of total births to foreign born mothers for states and large cities every year since 1990. Nationally, this percentage has increased steadily from 15.6% of all births in 1990 to 24.2% of all births in 2004.

The conditions under which infants are born can have lifelong effects on the child's development and readiness for school. Specifically, low-birthweight and preterm infants are at increased risk for developmental delays that can affect their chances of being left behind in school. The measures tracked in *The Right Start* are intended to provide policymakers, child advocates, and others with data that reflect conditions prior to birth, a newborn's health status at birth, and maternal characteristics that are associated with a child's educational and social outcomes.

Based on data from the National Center for Health Statistics, the report ranks every state and the 50 largest cities based on eight measures: births to teens; births to teens who were already mothers; births to unmarried women; births to mothers with less than 12 years of education; births to mothers receiving late or no prenatal care; births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy; low-birthweight births (less than 5.5 pounds); and preterm births (less than 37 weeks of gestation).

The report is available at www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/rightstart.jsp. The online format allows viewers to create custom reports such as state and city profiles, line graphs showing trends over time, color-coded U.S. maps, and ranking tables, all generated from *The Right Start* database. *The Right Start* is a joint project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT initiative and Child Trends, a research organization located in Washington, DC.

To request an interview, please contact Marci Bransdorf at media@aecf.org, or call 410.223.2852.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a data-driven, private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children, families, and communities in the United States. For more information, please visit www.aecf.org.