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Foundation for Child Development Finds Quality Of Life Of U.S. Children Stalled Since 2002
Annual Child Well-Being Index Also Shows Today's Teens Better Off Than Their Parents

(July 22, 2008 -- Washington) The quality of life of American children has been stalled since 2002, according to the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) 2008 Child Well-Being Index (CWI), an annual comprehensive measure of how children are faring in the United States, released today. The CWI calculates the overall status of American children for every year since 1975, and finds less than a three percent improvement for kids over the past generation.

Link to the full report here: www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/2008AnnualRelease.pdf.

“The slow growth of recent years is troubling; we haven’t made enough progress to shield ourselves for the future. Our data show us that the economic recession and slowdown of 2001-2002 hurt children. We also expect that the current challenges in the housing, employment, energy and food sectors will have negative impacts on our children’s well-being in years to come,” said Kenneth Land, project coordinator of the CWI, and a sociology professor and director of the Center for Population Health and Aging at Duke University.

“Our analysis shows some areas of real improvement from one generation to the next, but the key measure for America’s children is not where they’ve been or where they are, but where they should be. It’s time for America to demand better for our children,” said Ruby Takanishi, President of the Foundation for Children Development.

"From fiscal 2001 through 2006, overall federal discretionary spending grew very rapidly; even faster than mandatory spending. In such an environment, one would expect large investments in domestic programs that benefit children. However, that has not been the case and a lack of progress in the well-being of children is one result. Modest investments yield modest results," David Gray, director of the New America Foundation's (NAF) Workforce and Family Program.

In addition to noting children’s stalled improvement since 2002, the 2008 CWI also compares the well-being of teenagers in the first part of this decade (2003-2005) with the well-being of teenagers in the early years of the study (1975-1977). The teenagers of 1975-1977 are likely to include many who are now the parents of teenagers. Today’s teen “Echo Boomers” are less likely to participate in risky behavior (bearing children during teen years, involvement with violent crime, cigarette smoking, binge drinking, illicit drug use) than their parents; are less likely to die from accidents, disease or violence; but are more likely to be overweight or obese and slightly more likely to live below the poverty line than their parents.

The CWI is based on 28 key national indicators across seven quality-of-life domains. Data sources include the U.S. Census, Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Education Statistics, and other vital statistics and sample surveys.

[The Foundation for Child Development](http://www.fcd-us.org) is a national, private philanthropy dedicated to the principle that all families should have the social and material resources to raise their children to be healthy, educated and productive members of their communities.

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