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**REPORT: AMERICAN BLACK CHILDREN DOING BETTER THAN EVER,  
YET STILL LAG BEHIND WHITE CHILDREN IN QUALITY OF LIFE**

**Major Improvements Seen in Violent Crime, Poverty and Voting, but  
Educational Achievement Remains Stagnant**

*January 29, 2008* -- Black children are doing better than ever, but still have a long way to go before closing the racial-ethnic gap in quality of life, according to a report released today by the Foundation for Child Development (FCD), the first ever to analyze and compare trends in the well-being of Black, White, and Hispanic children over a span of nearly two decades.

According to the report, all children experienced overall improvements in quality of life between 1985 and 2004. However, because improvements were greater for Black and Hispanic children during this time span – particularly after 1993 – the gap between them and Whites is narrowing. But even if trends continue at their current pace, it will take at least an entire generation to fully eliminate these gaps.

“Even if we manage to continue to make progress towards closing the racial-ethnic gaps in children’s well-being at the same rate we have been, it would take another 18 years before Black children essentially caught up with White children,” said Ruby Takanishi, President/CEO of FCD. “As a leading world superpower, America can do and should do better than this.”

The report is entitled "Racial-Ethnic Inequality in Child Well-Being from 1985-2004: Gaps Narrowing but Persist." The researchers pulled data from several years of the FCD Child Well-Being Index (CWI) – an annual analysis of the quality of life for all American children. It found that the gap in the overall quality of life separating Black children from White children narrowed by 26 percent – a change driven largely by promising improvements in safety, economic security and health for children of color.

A few other key findings of the report include:

- **Education is stagnant:** While Black children have made progress in many areas, substantial gaps in education between White and Black children have shown little improvement. The Black disadvantage in preschool enrollment has been eliminated, but the gaps in reading and math indicators have barely changed, and the same is true of the Black-White gap in completing a Bachelor's degree.
- **Violent crime down:** Black children have seen the biggest improvement in their likelihood to commit a violent crime. While all children were much less likely to

commit a violent crime in 2004 than they were in 1985, the likelihood of Black children committing a violent crime has decreased so significantly that it is now nearly on par with Whites.

- **Voting up:** While the likelihood of all youth voting is up, Black youth are now more likely to vote than ever before, and the likelihood of Black youth voting is improving faster than it is for White children.
- **Poverty down:** The poverty gap between White children and Black children is closing. While rates of poverty are decreasing for all racial/ethnic groups, they are decreasing more rapidly for Black children than they are for White children.

“With the possibility of an economic recession, policies should aim to protect the economic security of American families, as well as key programs in health and education that support the largest number of children, especially those whose families earn below the median family income,” said Don Hernandez, researcher and author of the report. “A number of the positive changes outlined in this report can be attributed to smart policies and an active community. If we want to continue to improve our children’s lives, we must continue push for this kind of smart policy.”

*Key researchers and experts are available to comment and give background on the report’s findings.*

**About the FCD Child Well Being Index (CWI):** The CWI is an annual analysis of the quality of life for American children. It measures how well or poorly they are doing in seven areas: Health, Poverty, Education, Safety and Behavioral Concerns, Social Relationships, Community Connectedness and Emotional/Spiritual Well-Being, and then compares how well our children are doing today with how they have done in the past – to give an overall sense of whether their quality of life is improving over time.

**About FCD:** The Foundation for Child Development (FCD) 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. The Foundation seeks to understand children, particularly the disadvantaged, and to promote their well-being. We believe that families, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses and government at all levels share complementary responsibilities in the critical task of raising new generations.

*\*\*\*For a copy of the report, email Erica Sackin at [esackin@fenton.com](mailto:esackin@fenton.com) or call (212) 584- 5000\*\*\**

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