

\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

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**NEW REPORT: RACIAL/ETHNIC GAPS IN CHILDREN'S QUALITY OF LIFE ARE NARROWING, BUT WILL NOT DISAPPEAR FOR A GENERATION OR MORE**

**Black and Hispanic Children Less Likely to Do Drugs, Commit Suicide than White Children**

*January 29, 2008* – American children are doing better than ever, but we 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 gaps between them and White children are 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 14 years before Hispanic 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 titled "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.

A few key findings of the report include:

- **Poverty:** The poverty gap between White children, Black children and Hispanic children is closing. While rates of poverty are decreasing for all racial/ethnic groups, they are decreasing more rapidly for Black and Hispanic children than they are for White children.
- **Violent Crime:** The racial/ethnic gaps between who is more likely to commit a violent crime have become very small. 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. The gap between Hispanics and whites has

consistently been small, but Hispanics' likelihood to commit crimes has gone down to very low levels too.

- **Drugs and Alcohol:** Black and Hispanic children have always been less likely to use drugs and alcohol than White children. And, while the likelihood of drug and alcohol use has gone down for all children since 1985, the likelihoods for black and Hispanic children to use drugs have gone down considerably faster, widening the gaps between White, Black and Hispanic children even more.
- **Suicide Rates:** In the area of spiritual and emotional health, Black and Hispanic children have historically done better than Whites, and continue to do so.
- **Voting:** 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. Hispanic youth voting has not, however, kept pace.

“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 are thanks to smart policies and an active community. If we want to continue to improve our children’s lives, then we must continue to 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.

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