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Lingering Recession Affects Missouri's Children **Analysis Shows Differential Impact by Geography and Family Resources**

KANSAS CITY (July 1, 2011) — The impact of the recession continues to affect Missouri's children according to a report released this week by the Partnership for Children. The KIDS COUNT in Missouri 2010 Data Book provides state and county-level analysis of the socio-economic status and well-being of children. A key highlight of the report is that, overall, more children in Missouri are living in poverty. Of all children under 18, the fastest growing cohort of children in poverty is under age 6.

The annual KIDS COUNT data book, a compilation of statistical indicators, showed that seven outcome indicators improved in the 2010 study and three worsened. "In the early 2000s, Missouri made some progress in several areas that measure our children's economic well-being and opportunity," said Partnership for Children president, Charron Townsend. "But as we move into a sluggish economic recovery, the most vulnerable populations are experiencing the slowest recovery."

"Many of the indicators, such as the high school dropout rate and percent of students enrolled in the free and reduced price lunch program, are linked directly to the economic well-being of the child's family, noted Townsend. "By the end of 2008, the height of the recession, Missouri's unemployment rate increased significantly to

over nine percent. We can see the impact of this on indicators like the continued increasing percent of children enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program,” she said. Between 2005 and 2009, participation in this program increased from 41.7 percent to nearly 44 percent.

The seven areas where Missouri children remained stable or improved in the 2010 study were: births to mothers without a high school diploma and births to teenage mothers; infant mortality, child deaths and violent deaths to teenagers; and child abuse and neglect indicators, including the rate of children placed in foster or alternative family care.

Areas where Missouri children’s lives worsened included school students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, low birthweight infants, and the rate of students dropping out of high school.

Atchison County, in northwest Missouri, was ranked highest in the 2010 study. Atchison County placed in the top ten counties in four of the six categories used to calculate the composite ranking, Infant Mortality, High School Drop Outs, Births to Mothers without a High School Diploma, and Births to Teens.

Partnership for Children, , the Missouri Children’s Trust Fund and the University of Missouri Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis collaborated to produce KIDS COUNT in Missouri 2010.

The report can be found on the Partnership for Children web site: www.pfc.org or on OSEDA’s web site: <http://osedamissouri.edu/kidscount/>.