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60 percent of low-income parents with young children lack full-time employment; integrated approaches are necessary to break the cycle of poverty.

Washington, D.C. — With nearly one-third of children living in poverty in our city, we need to implement interventions and policies that work to strengthen entire families. A new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation titled *Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach*, calls for a comprehensive strategy to break the cycle of poverty by simultaneously building pathways for young children and their parents to achieve success.

“For too long, the approach to eliminating poverty has focused separately on children and families, instead of their interrelated needs. We’ve learned a lot about what works in separate areas, but we’re not combining these lessons to break the deep cycle of poverty for DC children,” said HyeSook Chung, executive director of DC Action for Children.

This KIDS COUNT® policy report emphasizes integrated approaches that provide families with the tools they need to overcome obstacles. Many low-income families in DC face stress from increasing housing costs, unpredictable and low-wage jobs that make it difficult to support children and inadequate access to reliable, high-quality child care.

In order to address the interrelated needs of children and parents, the report outlines three broad recommendations:

- **Create policies that equip parents and children with the income, tools and skills they need to succeed — as a family and as individuals.** State and federal governments should strengthen policies that expand job-training, educational and career opportunities; adopt policies that give parents more flexibility at work, such as paid time off; increase the Child Tax Credit for low-income parents of very young children; and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to increase the income of noncustodial parents.
- **Put common sense into common practice by structuring public systems to respond to the realities facing today’s families.** State and federal governments should promote collaboration and align policies and programs through interagency commissions and innovation funds. For example, child- and adult-focused state agencies should consolidate their data to look at the whole family. Federal policymakers could take advantage of new legislation and reauthorization periods for Head Start and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, among others, to bring together child and adult programs.
- **Use existing child, adult and neighborhood programs and platforms to build evidence for practical pathways out of poverty for entire families.** Early childhood, K-12, home-visiting, job-training and supportive housing programs could partner with one another to connect parents with financial coaching, job-readiness assistance, education and other tools to achieve financial stability, while also ensuring their children have access to high-quality care and schooling.

The DC KIDS COUNT data show that a two-generation approach through implementation of these recommendations could strengthen many families with young children ages 0 to 8 in DC:

- In 2012, in nearly 30 percent of families with young children, no resident parent had full-time employment. This percentage nearly doubled for low-income families. Lack of long-term, sufficient employment mitigates parents' ability to achieve economic stability for their household.
- Twenty-three percent of low-income parents report that inadequate access to child care affected their employment. Without reliable child care, low-income parents face challenges to securing and growing in a career that allows them to provide for their families. Furthermore, high-quality early care and education programs create opportunities for learning that children from low-income backgrounds may not have access to by other means.
- In nearly 60 percent of low-income households, a high school diploma is the highest degree attained by parents. In DC's competitive local job market, educational attainment is key to unlocking opportunities for parents and breaking the cycle of poverty.

These local statistics mostly mirror national trends; however, citywide data mask growing disparities in child success, educational attainment and career opportunities in DC. More nuanced DC KIDS COUNT data, analyzed at the neighborhood level, is available through our [DC KIDS COUNT Data Tool 2.0](#).

Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach will be available Nov. 12 at 12:01 a.m. EST at www.aecf.org.

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

DC Action for Children (www.dckids.org) is a nonprofit organization focused on improving conditions and outcomes for the District's children, youth and families through public awareness, policy, research and technical assistance. DC Action is the KIDS COUNT grantee for the District, tracking key indicators of child and youth well-being and neighborhood well-being for children and youth. Follow us on Twitter at @ActforDChildren and like us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/dcaction>.