



The Annie E. Casey Foundation and the KIDS COUNT State Network

Using Data to Inform Public Debate and Policy Change

Children of immigrants constitute the fastest growing segment of the child and youth population under the age of 18. By 2020, one in three children is projected to live in an immigrant family.

In response to this rapid demographic shift, the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2000 began investing in the capacity of national data and policy advocacy organizations across the ideological spectrum to develop immigrant-specific data. Subsequently, in 2006, it also began investing small grants to build the capacity of state-based child advocacy organizations in the KIDS COUNT network to generate data on immigrant children and families in their states.

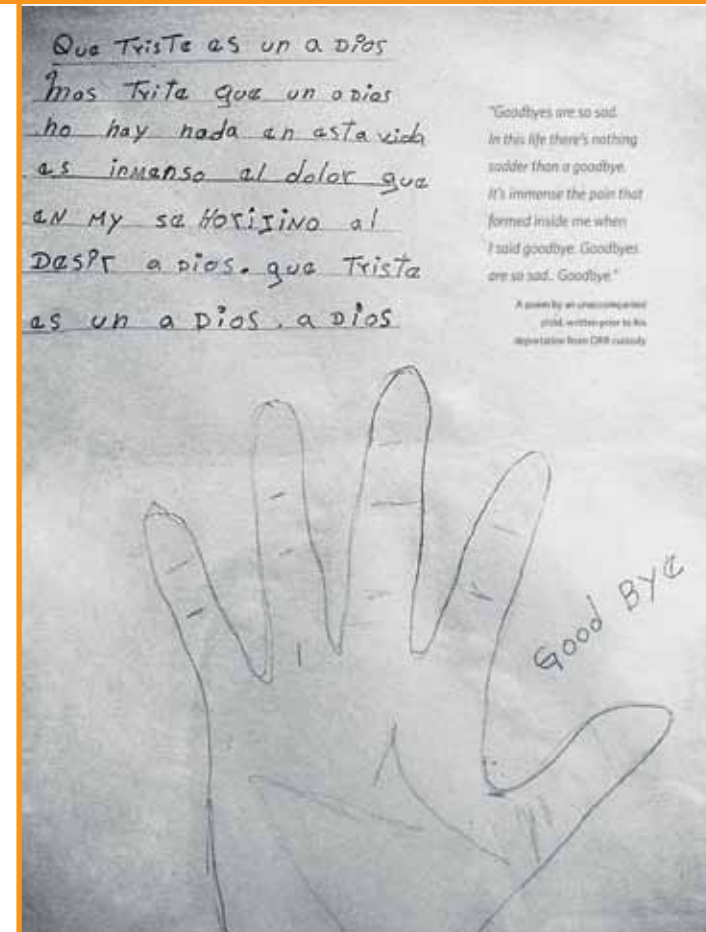
Supporting work in all 50 states and U.S. territories, these small grants positioned state child advocates to become unlikely but powerful allies in local media and state policy arenas. “These KIDS COUNT advocates have provided crucial data to ensure that children in immigrant families are not left out of policy discussions,” says Irene Lee, director of the Foundation’s Successful Working Families unit.



- Texas:** A study by the Center for Public Policy Priorities, *A Child Alone and Without Papers*, on the effects of U.S. immigration policy on the deportation and repatriation of 43,000 undocumented, unaccompanied children generated 69 media stories and shaped groundbreaking federal legislation, the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2008* (H.R. 7311).
- Utah:** Voices for Utah’s Children produced a set of briefs on the impact of immigration raids, repeal of in-state tuition, and increasing funding for English as a Second Language programs in Salt Lake City. These briefs reached multiple sectors, including business, and were used to support legislation to remove the five-year waiting period for legal immigrant children.
- Kentucky:** Kentucky Youth Advocates’ *New Voices from the Bluegrass: A Portrait of Kentucky’s Children in Immigrant Families*, emphasized the strengths of immigrant families and presented recommendations on language access in health services. The report briefed the Kentucky Judiciary Committee on the negative effects of a bill on immigrant families that was ultimately defeated.
- Virginia:** Voices for Virginia’s Children issued a research brief highlighting the importance of immigrant children and families to the state’s economic future. Its testimony helped to defeat bills requiring non-profits to verify the legal status of clients and denying undocumented children admission to any public college or university in Virginia, even at out-of-state rates.

“Immigrant kids and families are the fastest growing demographics in the United States. Having funders look at how we remove language and literacy barriers for immigrant kids and families is important to the future of the country. Both nationally and at the state level, it will help position the United States to have the skills and workforce we need to compete.”

Irene Lee
Director, Successful Working Families, The Annie E. Casey Foundation



From *A Child Alone and Without Papers*



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