

# GOVERNOR'S TOWN HALL MEETINGS

**RISE TO THE CHALLENGE:**  
Reducing Childhood Poverty and  
Improving Childhood Outcomes in Kansas



# CHILDHOOD POVERTY

## FACT SHEET

### REDUCE POVERTY AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITY

It is an unfortunate fact that child poverty rates have persistently risen over the past decade. Americans, service providers and political leaders recognize that reducing poverty, and in particular reducing child poverty, is no longer something we can afford to overlook. While our country has made strides in reducing poverty among the elderly, we have not been successful in combating the economic hardships experienced by children (Brookings Institute). Current data suggests 15.7 million children, 22 percent of the children in our country, are living in poverty -- more than one in five American children. As unemployment has continued to rise, poverty has become a more immediate concern for a growing number of individuals and families. The 2011 federal poverty level (FPL) is \$22,350 a year for a family of four. However the current federal definition of poverty equals about 30 percent of the median household income in the United States, and has not been revised since the 1960s when it was nearly 50 percent of the median. Research suggests that to meet basic needs, families actually need an income of roughly twice the official poverty level, that is, \$44,700 a year for a family of four.

Persons in Family	48 Contiguous States & D.C.
1	\$10,890
2	14,710
3	18,530
4	22,350
5	26,170
6	29,990
7	33,810
8	37,630
For each additional person, add	3,820

SOURCE: Federal Register, January 2011

### KEY INDICATORS OF CHILD WELL-BEING

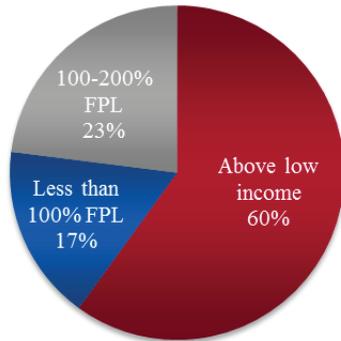
The following information outlines key indicators of child well-being according to the 2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book (based on U.S. Census data). These measures cannot depict the full range of conditions that affect children's lives but are used to provide a developmental perspective on childhood well-being. The four indicators outlined below pertain to childhood poverty.

Key Indicators	KANSAS TREND		CHANGE OVER TIME	NATIONAL TREND		CHANGE OVER TIME	NATIONAL RANK																																
<b>Percent of children in poverty</b> (income below \$21,756 for a family of two adults and two children in 2009)	2000	12	50%	2000	17	18%	23																																
	2009	18		2009	20			<b>Percent of children in single parent families</b>	2000	27	11%	2000	31	10%	12	2009	30	2009	34	<b>Percent of teens not in school and not high school graduates</b> (ages 16-19)	2000	10	-50%	2000	11	-45%	9	2009	5	2009	6	<b>Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment</b>	2000	*NA	--	2000	*NA	--	8
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\*NA: Comparable data not available for 2000 for these indicators. Find more information and the definitions and data sources for indicators at: [www.datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011](http://www.datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011)

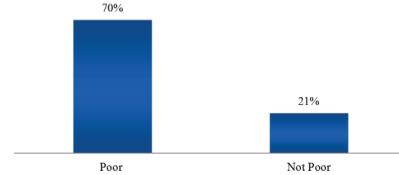
## DEMOGRAPHICS OF POOR CHILDREN IN KANSAS

### Kansas Children by Income Level

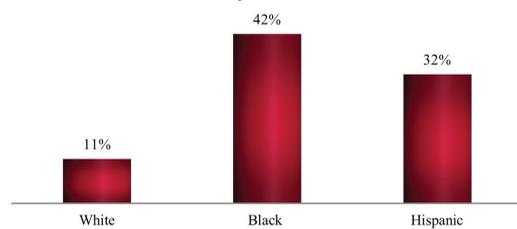


Source: National Center for Children in Poverty (nccp.org) 2009

### Kansas Children in Single Parent Families by Income Level



### Kansas Children in Poor Families by Race

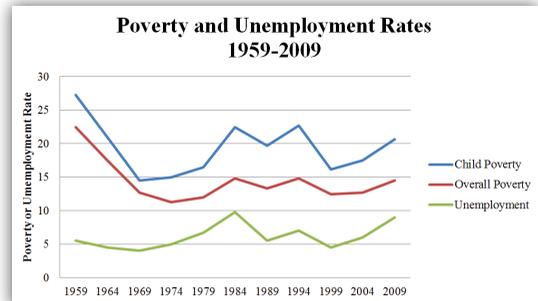


## KANSAS PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION BY INCOME LEVEL

**Employment Rates:** Unemployment rates from 1959 to 2007 and their relationship to overall and child poverty rates. Nationally, unemployment rates have a strong correlation to overall rates of poverty, and in particular to poverty among children (Brookings Institute).

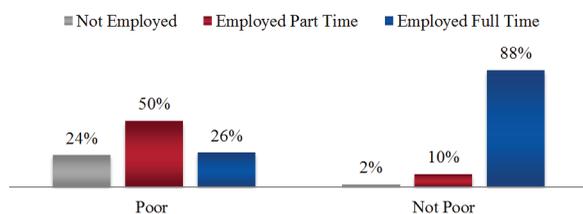
Over the past two decades, the percent of children living in single-parent families has increased; such children typically have fewer resources available to them than children growing up in two-parent homes. One noteworthy trend during that same two-decade period is the decline in economic well-being among children and families at the lower half of the income distribution scale. The number of low-income children climbed steadily from 27 million in 2001 to 31 million in 2009. Almost 11 percent of our nation's children had at least one unemployed parent in 2010.

This affected nearly 8 million children. The number of low-income children more than doubled between 2007 and 2010. Children growing up in homes where parents had a high school diploma (or had not graduated from high school) were far more likely to experience parental unemployment than children with a college-educated parent. Recent research confirms a causal link between family income and children's academic achievement and later success.

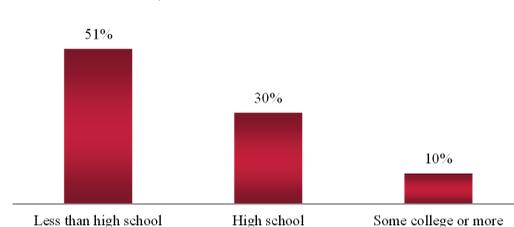


Source: 2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book

### Parent's Employment Status in Kansas



### Kansas Children in Poor Families by Parents' Education



## TOPIC #1

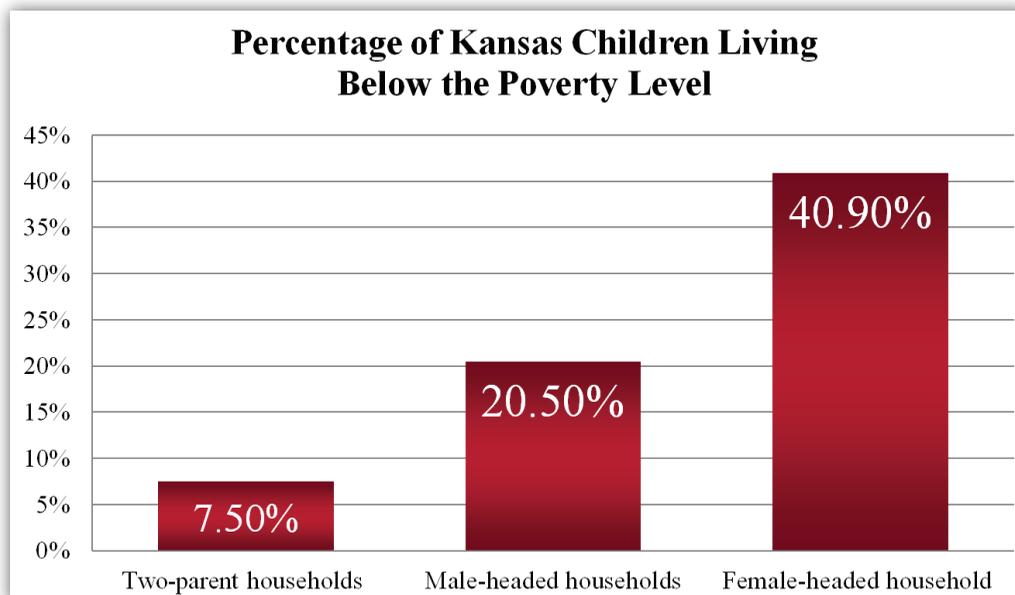
# FAMILY STRUCTURE

Question #1: Research shows the children of single parents and/or cohabiting parents are at a greater risk for a broad range of problems, from trouble in school to psychological stress, physical abuse and poverty, compared to children living in married two-parent families. What can we do to ensure that Kansas children grow up in healthy, married-parent families? With those findings in mind, what are your thoughts regarding family structure and its relation to child well-being?

**Consider: What is the role of state government; what is role of community organizations; what is the role specifically of faith-based organizations?**

Household structure has changed dramatically in the United States since 1960. The number of married-couple families has dropped steadily, while the number of single-parent families has continued to increase. Since the declaration of war on poverty more than 50 years ago, demographics of the family have changed to show high rates of cohabitation, non-marital childbearing and divorce. Between 1960 and 2008, the number of cohabitating unmarried couples increased 12-fold. Out of wedlock births increased 8-fold. In 1940, only 4 percent of children were born outside of marriage. In 2009, 41 percent of births occurred outside of marriage, a sharp increase. Despite positive attitudes towards marriage, only about 17 percent of unmarried couples who had a child together have gotten married by the time the child is five years old. In addition, the divorce rate has almost doubled since 1960.

Along with these changes in the patterns of family structure, more single-parent families are finding themselves living at or near the poverty level. Studies report that in Kansas children living in two-parent households are 84 percent less likely to be living at or below poverty. Approximately 41 percent of children living with a single mother are considered to be below the poverty level, compared to 7.5 percent of their peers living in married-couple families. Single-parent families with children are more than six times more likely to be poor than families in which the parents are married.



*Source: U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2005-2009*



## TOPIC #2

# EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Question #2: Kansas Statewide Assessments for all students show an 11-year growth trend in reading and mathematics skills. Although our poorest children are also demonstrating an increase in proficiency levels, they continue to fall below statewide trends. What can Kansans do to help our low-income students succeed in their education?

**Consider: What is the role of state government; what is role of community organizations; what is the role specifically of faith-based organizations?**

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback has established statewide goals in his “Kansas Report Card.” One of the report card’s desired outcomes is to increase the percentage of 4th grade students reading at or above grade level. The need for enhancing the impact of our children’s educational experiences to protect the well-being of Kansas children is a top priority. The Kansas Department of Education indicates that reading and math assessments are given each year to every grade, three through eight, and once in high school. Performance levels by grade showed small dips in the early grades in reading, with percentages at the top three performance levels rising in the 5th grade and beyond.

## KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRADE 4 READING LEVEL STATISTICS

### Dropouts and Poorly Prepared Students Negatively Affect the Economy

- More than 9,500 students did not graduate from Kansas’ high schools in 2010; the lost lifetime earnings in Kansas for that class of dropouts alone total nearly \$2.5 billion.
- Kansas could save as much as \$126 million in health care costs over the lifetime of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.
- If all Kansas high school graduates were adequately prepared for college, the state could save as much as \$42.8 million a year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings.
- If the male high school graduation rate increased by just 5 percent, Kansas’ economy could see a combination of law-enforcement savings and additional revenue of about \$62.7 million each year.

	Exemplary		Exceeds Standard		Meets Standard		Approaches Standard		Academic Warning		Not Tested
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2010
All Students	31.7%	27.0%	29.3%	32.6%	26.2%	27.3%	7.2%	7.8%	5.1%	5.0%	0.4%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>33.2%</b>	<b>34.2%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
Special Ed	18.0%	15.5%	22.3%	23.4%	36.0%	37.6%	13.3%	13.4%	9.8%	9.2%	0.8%
English Language Learners	12.3%	10.3%	22.9%	25.1%	35.6%	35.9%	13.5%	15.2%	13.8%	12.3%	1.2%
African American	12.5%	11.4%	23.5%	24.4%	34.3%	35.6%	14.7%	14.9%	14.5%	13.2%	0.5%
Hispanic	14.8%	14.0%	24.8%	28.5%	35.1%	33.9%	12.7%	13.1%	11.4%	9.8%	0.7%
White	37.5%	32.1%	31.1%	34.4%	23.2%	24.7%	5.2%	5.8%	2.7%	2.8%	0.2%
Asian	38.6%	31.9%	25.8%	30.2%	22.3%	25.3%	5.5%	6.1%	6.4%	5.4%	1.1%
American Indian	25.3%	20.0%	27.6%	31.4%	31.4%	31.2%	9.3%	9.0%	6.1%	7.7%	0.7%
Multi-Racial	26.8%	23.2%	29.0%	35.4%	29.6%	28.5%	8.6%	8.4%	5.6%	4.5%	0.0%
Female	33.0%	28.4%	29.3%	32.9%	26.0%	26.4%	6.7%	7.5%	4.6%	4.5%	0.3%
Male	30.5%	25.6%	29.4%	32.3%	26.3%	28.1%	7.7%	8.1%	5.7%	5.5%	0.4%
Migrant	14.5%	8.5%	25.5%	26.6%	33.3%	32.7%	10.9%	12.6%	10.9%	18.1%	1.5%
Native Hawaiian/ Pac. Islander	---	14.6%	---	25.0%	---	39.6%	---	10.4%	---	6.3%	4.2%



## TOPIC #3

# CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Question #3: Most Americans believe, and professionals agree, that parents are in the best position to nurture, protect and care for their children. When parents are unable or fail to meet the needs of their children, what resources and solutions can Kansas use to offer these children?

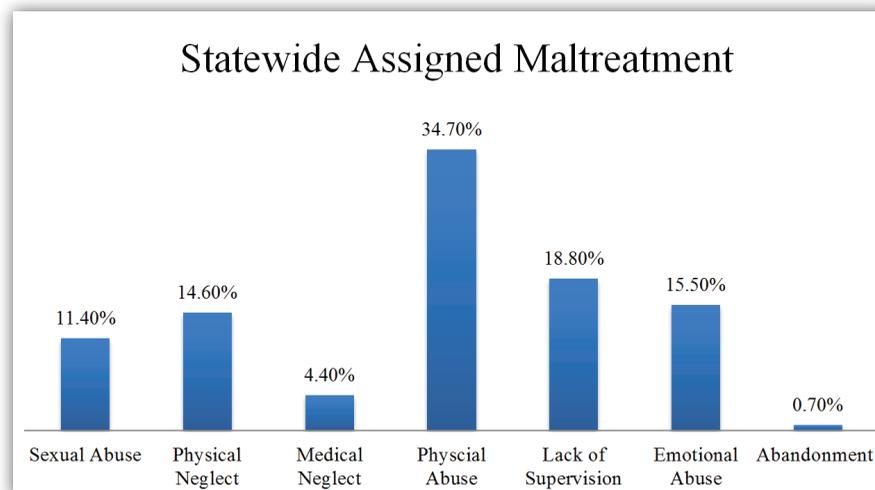
**Consider: What is the role of state government; what is role of community organizations; what is the role specifically of faith-based organizations?**

## REDUCING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN KANSAS

Although there is no single known cause of child maltreatment, research has identified risk factors or family attributes that are often associated with child abuse and neglect. Children living in families and environments where these risk factors are present have a higher probability of experiencing maltreatment.

### Environmental Factors

There are several reasons why associations occur between poverty and child abuse and neglect. Studies indicate that poor families are faced with situations in their environments that are far less common in affluent families: extreme financial stress, unemployment, lack of education, unstable housing, family conflict, poor community support, dangerous physical environments and reduced access to health care. It is the combination of these factors that can affect how any parent is able to adequately care for a child. While it is worth noting that a majority of poor families do not abuse and/or neglect their children, there does seem to be a correlation between a lack of money and child maltreatment. According to the authors of the National Incidence Studies (NIS), income level was associated with all types of child maltreatment except emotional neglect and child fatalities. These studies indicate that children in poor households are at a greater risk of maltreatment and also more likely to be significantly injured by the abuse. *Compared with children living with married biological parents, those whose single parent had a live-in partner had more than eight times the rate of maltreatment overall, more than ten times the rate of abuse, and more than six times the rate of neglect. Incidence rates were higher for children living with one parent but lower for children living with two parents.*



Source: Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services

### Child in Need of Care (CINC) Intake Reports FY 2011

SRS Region	Assignment Rates for All	Assigned as Abuse/Neglect	Assigned as Non-Abuse/Neglect
Kansas City Metro	45%	67%	33%
Northeast	52%	69%	31%
South Central	53%	67%	33%
Southeast	55%	70%	30%
West	55%	64%	36%
Wichita	54%	61%	39%
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>34%</b>

*Source: Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services*

#### Family Factors

Situational family factors such as single parenthood, marital conflict, domestic violence, unemployment, financial strain and social isolation can significantly impact the well-being of children. For example, children living in single-parent families are at higher risk of experiencing physical and sexual abuse and neglect than those children living with two biological parents.

One study found that children raised in single-parent families are 14 to 20 times more likely to suffer serious abuse. In addition, single-parent households are statistically more likely to have lower incomes and are increasingly living below the national poverty level. Lower income -- coupled with increased family stress stemming from the burden of being the sole responsible adult in a home is thought to be contributing factors when single parents mistreat their children. Likewise, children living in cohabiting households are at a greater risk of suffering abuse. For example, when compared with children raised in households with married parents, children in cohabiting households are 20 times more likely to suffer serious abuse if their biological parents are co-habiting, and 33 times more likely to suffer serious abuse if their single mother is living with an unrelated male.

### Notes

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# SPEAKERS



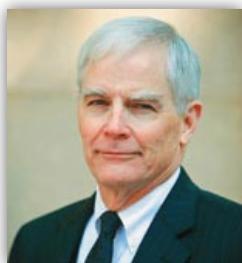
**Robert Rector, The Heritage Foundation**  
Senior Research Fellow

Robert Rector is a leading national authority on poverty, the U.S. welfare system and immigration and is a Heritage Foundation Senior Research Fellow. Dubbed the “intellectual godfather” of welfare reform Mr. Rector concentrates on a range of issues relating to welfare reform, family breakdown and America’s various social ills. Rector played a major role in crafting the 1996 federal welfare reform legislation, which, for the first time, required recipients to work or get job training for their benefits. Since its passage Mr. Rector has continued to conduct extensive research on the economic costs of welfare and its role in undermining families. In 2006, for example, when the original welfare reform law was up for renewal, Mr. Rector worked with key Senate and House staffers to strengthen the law’s work requirements such as refusing to let states count bed rest as “work.” And Mr. Rector pushed for a new provision: the Healthy Marriage Initiative. This aims to help keep welfare families intact – a critical factor in reducing poverty and the resulting government dependency as getting a job.

Mr. Rector’s work on the 1996 welfare reforms earned him the Dr. W. Glenn and Rita Ricardo Campbell Award, given to the Heritage employee for “outstanding contributions to the analysis and promotion of a Free Society.” He is the author of America’s Failed \$5.4 Trillion War on Poverty, a comprehensive examination of U.S. welfare programs, and co-editor of Steering the Elephant: How Washington Works.

Prior to joining Heritage in 1984, he worked as a Legislative Assistant in the Virginia House of Delegates and as a Management Analyst at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. He has also served as a Commissioner on the congressionally mandated Millennial Housing Commission.

Mr. Rector holds a bachelor’s degree from the College of William and Mary and a master’s degree in political science from Johns Hopkins University.



**Ron Haskins, Brookings Institute**  
Senior Fellow, Economic Studies  
Co-Director, Center on Children and Families

Ron Haskins is a senior fellow in the Economic Studies program and co-director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution and senior consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore. From February to December of 2002 he was the senior advisor to the president for welfare policy at the White House. He spent 14 years on the staff of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee finishing as the subcommittee’s staff director.

From 1981-1985, he was a senior researcher at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He also taught and lectured on history and education at UNC, Charlotte and developmental psychology at Duke University.

He is the author of Work Over Welfare: The Inside Story of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law (2006) and the co-author of Creating an Opportunity Society (2009) with Isabel Sawhill and Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America (Pew, 2008). He has appeared frequently on radio and television and has written articles and editorials for several newspapers and periodicals including the Washington Post, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Policy Review, State Government News, American Enterprise, National Review, and the Weekly Standard. He serves as an advisor to Mathematica Policy Research on the evaluation of adolescent pregnancy prevention approaches.

His areas of expertise include welfare reform, child care, child support, marriage, child protection, and budget and deficit issues. In 1997, Haskins was selected by the National Journal as one of the 100 most influential people in the federal government. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (2000); the President’s Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Human Services from the American Public Human Services Association (2005); and the Lion Award from the Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (2010). He holds a Bachelor’s degree in History, a Master’s in Education, and a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology, from UNC, Chapel Hill. Dr. Haskins, who was a noncommissioned officer in the United States Marine Corps from 1963 to 1966, lives with his wife in Rockville, Maryland and is the father of four grown children.



