

WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

August 2012

Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment Is Trending Upwards

As I stated in the July *Nevada KIDS COUNT Newsletter*, I plan to write about each of the 16 indicators that comprise the Annie E. Casey Foundation's (AECF) new index on child well-being.¹ In this one, I discuss the percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment (permanent), one of the four indicators of Economic Well-Being. The indicator is also known as "children whose parents lack secure employment."

In 2010, 36 percent of Nevada children under age 18 lived in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment.² Among the states, Nevada ranked 38th on this indicator, along with California, Oregon, Arkansas, and Louisiana. North Dakota ranked 1st/best (22 percent), and Mississippi ranked 50th/worst (39 percent). The rate for the nation was 33 percent, slightly better than Nevada's.

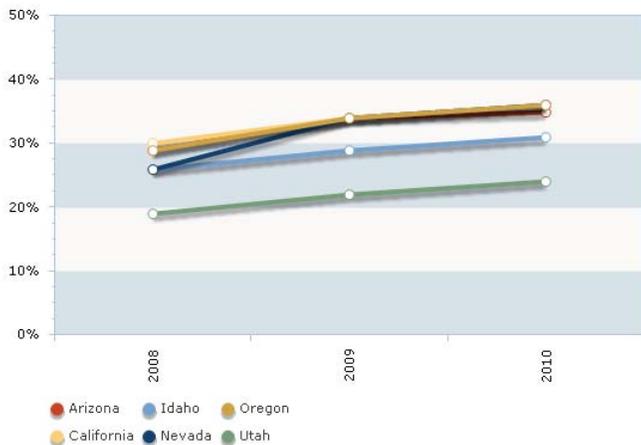
Between 2008 and 2010, the percent of children whose parents lacked secure employment in Nevada increased from 26 to 36, a 10 percentage point or a 38 percent increase (Figure 1).³ The change represents an increase of 66,000 children—from 173,000 to 239,000. Nevada's neighboring states also show increases (Figure 1). Of Nevada's neighbors, Utah had the largest percentage increase (26 percent), and Idaho had the smallest (19 percent). The rate for the United States increased from 27 percent in 2008 to 33 percent in 2010—a 22 percent increase (Figure 2).

¹In the June *Newsletter*, I introduced you to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's (AECF) new index that is used to rank states on child well-being. The new index incorporates four domains that capture what children need most to thrive: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health, and (4) Family and Community. Each of the four domains is comprised of four individual indicators for a total of 16.

²"The share of all children under age 18 living in families where no parent has regular, full-time employment. For children living in single-parent families, this means the resident parent did not work at least 35 hours per week, at least 50 weeks in the 12 months prior to the survey. For children living in married-couple families, this means neither parent worked at least 35 hours per week, at least 50 weeks in the 12 months prior to the survey. Children living with neither parent were listed as not having secure parental employment because those children are likely to be economically vulnerable. Children under age 18 who are householders, spouses of householders, or unmarried partners of householders were excluded from this analysis. This measure is very similar to the measure called 'Secure Parental Employment,' used by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics in its publication 'America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being.'" Source: AECF KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?ind=5043>, 8/7/12.

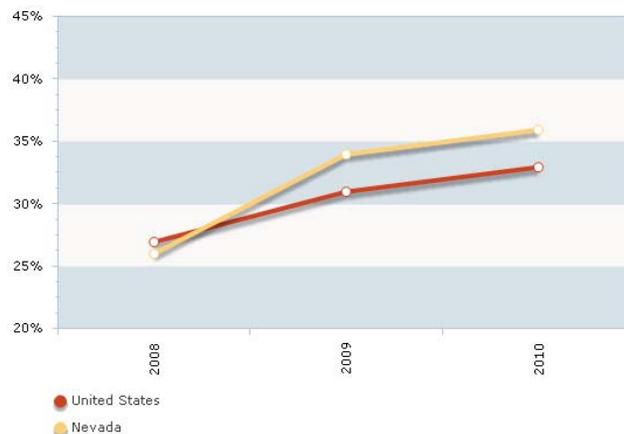
³The data source for this indicator is the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). Due to changes in the wording of the labor force questions in the 2008 ACS, the Census Bureau recommends caution in making data comparisons from 2008 or later with data from prior years. Therefore, this was not done, which precludes a pre- and post-Great Recession comparison.

Figure 1. Percent of Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment, Nevada and Neighboring States: 2008 to 2010



Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 - 2010 American Community Survey, retrieved from the AECF KIDS COUNT Data Center, 8/6/12.

Figure 2. Percent of Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment, Nevada and the United States: 2008 to 2010



Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 - 2010 American Community Survey, retrieved from the AECF KIDS COUNT Data Center, 8/6/12.

Families in which parents have stable employment is essential for the development and advancement of all children. Shore and Shore (2009), in a *KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief* for the AECF, recommend eight strategies for workforce development:

- “Provide comprehensive employment and educational services geared to low-skill job seekers
- Add rungs at the bottom of the career ladder
- Focus relentlessly on job quality
- Support job retention and advancement
- Address the needs of both workers and employers
- Expand child care options for working families
- Address transportation issues
- Take a systemic approach to workforce development”⁴

⁴Shore, Rima and Barbara Shore, “Increasing the Percentage of Children Whose Parents Have Stable Employment,” *KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief*, The Annie E. Casey Foundation,” July 2009, p. 2.