



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CENSUS POVERTY DATA SHOWS DIRE IMPLICATIONS FOR OREGON'S CHILDREN.**  
**Portland, OR – September 13, 2011 -**

Oregon's working families continue to face a painful struggle to provide basic needs like food and health care, new numbers from the census bureau show.

According to data released by the Census Bureau this morning, the poverty rate for both children and families in the United States rose between 2009 and 2010, with 9.2 million families now in poverty. The child poverty rate hit a record high of 22%, a level not seen since 1994. For children under age 6, the poverty rate between 2009 and 2010 increased to 25.3 percent from 23.8 percent, while the number in poverty increased to 6.3 million from 6.0 million nation-wide.

"A financially stable family gives children the best chance at a healthy, safe and successful life," says Children First Policy Director, Regan Gray. "These numbers show that now, more than ever, it's critical that legislators continue to fund programs like Employment Related Day Care and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which allow parents to find work while providing for their children's most fundamental needs."

Children who grow up in poverty suffer higher rates of health, and developmental setbacks than other children. According to the non-profit advocacy group, Children First for Oregon, children's physical health, cognitive ability, school achievement, and behavioral and emotional well being suffer as a result of growing up in poverty. With Oregon's unemployment rate still above the national average and SNAP /foodstamp enrollment at an all time high, many families in Oregon are living on the brink.

"A small amount of assistance with the cost of food, child care, or a doctor's appointment can protect a family's security and all of our children's future success," say Gray. "At the same time, this assistance can prevent costly child-welfare interventions down the road. In this gradual economic recovery, families need all the help they can get to provide a safe and stable environment for their children. Having these basic needs met allows parents to focus on improving their family's situation, and can help us balance our budget as a state."

More detailed information on the state of Oregon's children will be released next Thursday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, when the American Community Survey state-by-state data is made available.

*Children First is Oregon's most respected nonprofit, nonpartisan child advocacy organization, committed to improving the lives of Oregon's vulnerable children and their families. Our mission is to make long-term systemic change by advocating for policies and programs that keep children healthy and safe and strengthen families.*

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