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**Children First for Oregon Releases 2009 County Data Book
on the Status of Oregon's Children**

Portland, OR- March 16, 2010- Today's release of Children First for Oregon's 2009 County Data book on the Status of Oregon's Children coincides with *Cover the Uninsured Week*, the nation's largest annual mobilization effort to raise awareness about the need to cover America's uninsured.

While the nation focuses much of its attention on the federal health care debate, Children First for Oregon reminds us of the great opportunity Oregon has to set a national example by building on our state's success and finishing the job of enrolling all 80,000 newly eligible children into Healthy Kids. As of March 1st, 35,000 of these newly eligible children have enrolled in the program. However, in 2008 there were 117, 889 uninsured children in Oregon.

"As the recession continues to squeeze Oregon families, it is now more important than ever that we continue to advance the policies and programs that keep children healthy and safe and strengthen families" said Robin Christian, Children First for Oregon's Executive Director. "Oregon is quickly proving that the problem of covering uninsured children is one we can solve, but as families continue to lose their jobs and their insurance, we must ensure that we have the necessary supports in place to protect them."

Accessing health insurance coverage is just one of the issues facing Oregon's children and families.

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Statewide Indicators from the 2009 County Data book on the Status of Oregon's Children

- 13,965 children were in foster care at least once last year
- 151,964 children live below the federal poverty line (\$22,050 for a family of four in 2008)
- 256,834 families receive food stamps, a 27% increase over last year
- 43,535 families receive assistance through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, a 26% increase over last year

Children First is making a commitment to improve these numbers.

Children First's goals for 2011 include ensuring that 95% of Oregon children have health coverage, that the earned income tax credit is increased by 6% to support struggling families and that the number of kids who experience two foster care placements per year is reduced by 20%.

Children First underscores its commitment to identifying areas for improvement and increased accountability in Oregon's child welfare system by including three new measures on the status of kids in foster care in this year's data book. In April, Children First will release a detailed analysis of this data and recommend next steps for improving the experience of children in foster care.

Children First works to make Oregon a place where all children are healthy and safe, and struggling families have the support they need to thrive. Our mission is to make long-term systemic change by advocating for the adoption of policies and programs that keep children healthy and safe and strengthen families. KIDS COUNT is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization that funds a nationwide network of projects that support disadvantaged children and families.

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