



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Tuesday, April 29, 2008**

33 Whitney Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06510  
Voice: 203-498-4240  
Fax: 203-498-4242  
[www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org)

Contact: Priscilla Canny, PhD, Managing Director, 203-498-4240  
Shelley Geballe, JD, MPH, President, 203-498-4240

### **Connecticut's Income Gaps Have Costly Consequences for the State's Children**

*CT group calls for commitment to overcoming  
barriers for Connecticut children*

The impact of Connecticut's income gaps, which are growing faster than in any other state in the country, are being felt by the state's children in their physical and mental health and educational development. A new study released by Connecticut Voices for Children indicates that low-income children are at least twice as likely as higher-income children to have physical health problems, experience emotional and behavioral health difficulties, have learning disabilities, and be at risk of developmental delays.

This report follows another from Connecticut Voices for Children, "Pulling Apart in Connecticut," which found that over the last two decades, the gaps in inflation-adjusted income between wealthy and poor Connecticut families and between wealthy and middle-income families have grown more in Connecticut than in any other state in the country. While real income for the poorest families in the state has declined since the late 1980s by 17%, the largest drop of any state, the wealthiest families have enjoyed an increase in their real income of 45%.

This new report, "Income Gaps are Harming Connecticut's Children," suggests that this growing income inequality is affecting opportunities and outcomes for Connecticut's children. **Indeed, the gap between Connecticut's low-income and higher-income children in overall measures of child well-being is the fourth worst among all states.**

Connecticut often ranks well in measures of child well-being when all of its children are compared to other states. But the picture changes dramatically when income groups are separated. Among higher-income children, Connecticut ranks 15<sup>th</sup> highest among all states in child well-being compared to higher-income children in other states. However, Connecticut's low-income children fare *poorly* compared to low-income children in other states, ranking only 39<sup>th</sup>.

The findings are released as the Governor and legislative leaders are proposing to pass a state budget that makes no new significant investments in educational, economic, and other supports that could improve this gap in child well-being.

-MORE-

“This report exposes the costs of inaction and delay in taking responsibility for the challenges faced by Connecticut’s children,” said Shelley Geballe, President of Connecticut Voices for Children. “At the time when we need to step up investment in our children, the state is pulling back. We can’t afford a status quo state budget that does nothing new to address these problems.”

This state report by Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based advocacy organization for children and families, was based on an analysis of data by Child Trends, a national research organization. The analysis used state-level data from two federal government sources that recently became available – the National Survey of Children’s Health and the American Community Survey. The report found that Connecticut children in low-income families were at least twice as likely as children in higher income families to:

- have health problems;
- have a physical limitation that prevents them from engaging in activities with other children;
- be overweight;
- have emotional or behavioral difficulties;
- exhibit problem behaviors (e.g., excessively arguing with or disobeying parents, bullying others);
- be at risk for developmental delay in speech and comprehension, motor skills, or behaviors; and
- have a learning disability.

Although Connecticut is a relatively wealthy state, one in four (25%) Connecticut children live in families with income under 200% of the federal poverty level (\$33,200 for a family of three), which is roughly equivalent to Connecticut’s self-sufficiency standard. This standard, developed by the state’s Office of Policy and Management, measures the income needed to support a family’s basic needs, based on the local cost of living for housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and taxes. The report classified children living under this self-sufficiency standard as “low-income,” and other children as “higher-income.”

Connecticut Voices warned that the well-being of the state’s low-income children is of great importance not only to the children themselves, but to the future prosperity of Connecticut as these children represent a quarter of the state’s future workforce. The organization called on the Governor and legislative leaders to take responsibility for increasing opportunities for Connecticut children and reducing economic gaps.

“Opportunities for a healthy and successful future should not be limited by family income,” said Priscilla Canny, Managing Director of Connecticut Voices for Children and co-author of the report. “Growing economic gaps are making our children sicker and less educationally prepared.”

Connecticut Voices for Children ([www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org)) is a research-based policy and advocacy organization that works to advance strategic public investment and wise public policies to benefit our state’s children, youth and families.

-END-