

Number of Minnesota children living in poverty up 56 percent

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Between 2008 and 2009, nearly 34,000 more children were living in poverty in Minnesota, according to the American Community Survey. This continues an alarming trend in Minnesota that has seen a 56% increase (60,000 more children) in children living in poverty since 2000. Poverty is defined as an annual income of below \$21,947 for a four-person family.

Additionally, Minnesota's increase is greater than other states, causing the state's ranking to decline from 5th to 12th. "All of these dramatic shifts in poverty numbers raise great concern for our children's future," stated Jim Koppel, Children's Defense Fund (CDF)–Minnesota Director, "because we know that living in poverty is the greatest predictor of future struggles for our children."

Children living in poverty are significantly less prepared for school, drop out of school at much higher rates, and are more likely to commit crimes in what CDF refers to as the "cradle to prison pipeline." With little access to basic needs and increased family stress, babies can't thrive. In fact, their brains suffer as a consequence of these 'toxic stresses.' Research continues to show how that negatively impacts healthy brain development and leads directly to bad outcomes.

With more Minnesota children living in poverty, the state will suffer even greater long-term fallout. Conversely, investments in children today can reap tremendous dividends in the future. By providing good jobs with livable wages, education, food supports, quality child care, safe neighborhoods, health insurance for every child, we as a state can look forward to a successful and prepared workforce. Businesses prosper with a solid workforce and the state can reap the ensuing benefits.

Koppel concluded, "Minnesota has been a leader but we are falling behind – we must do better for our children and that has to start now."