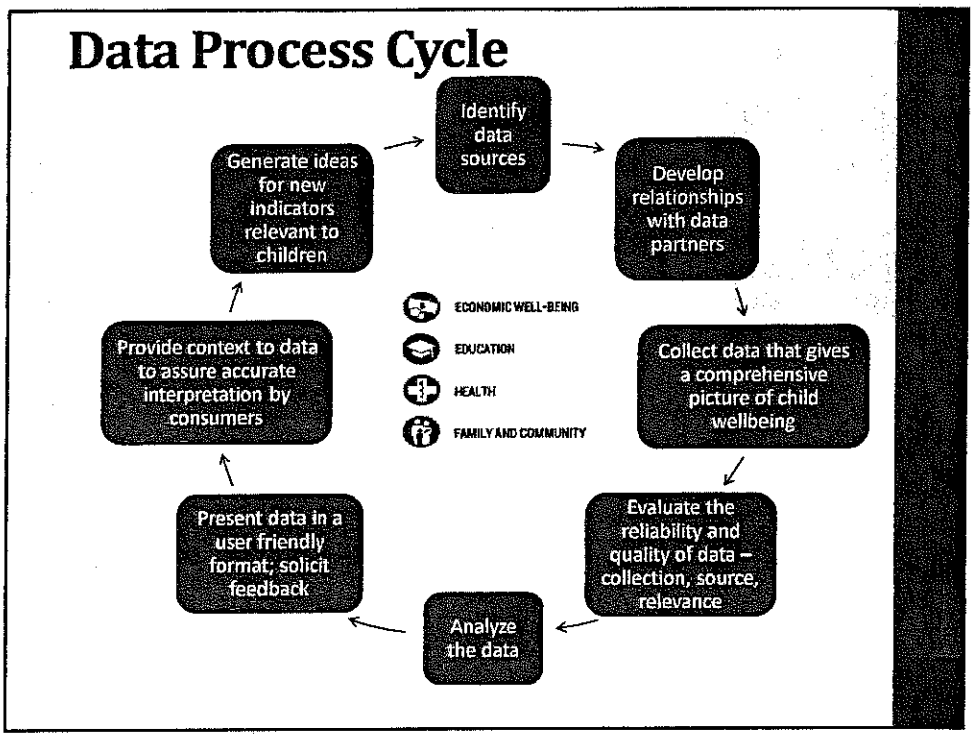
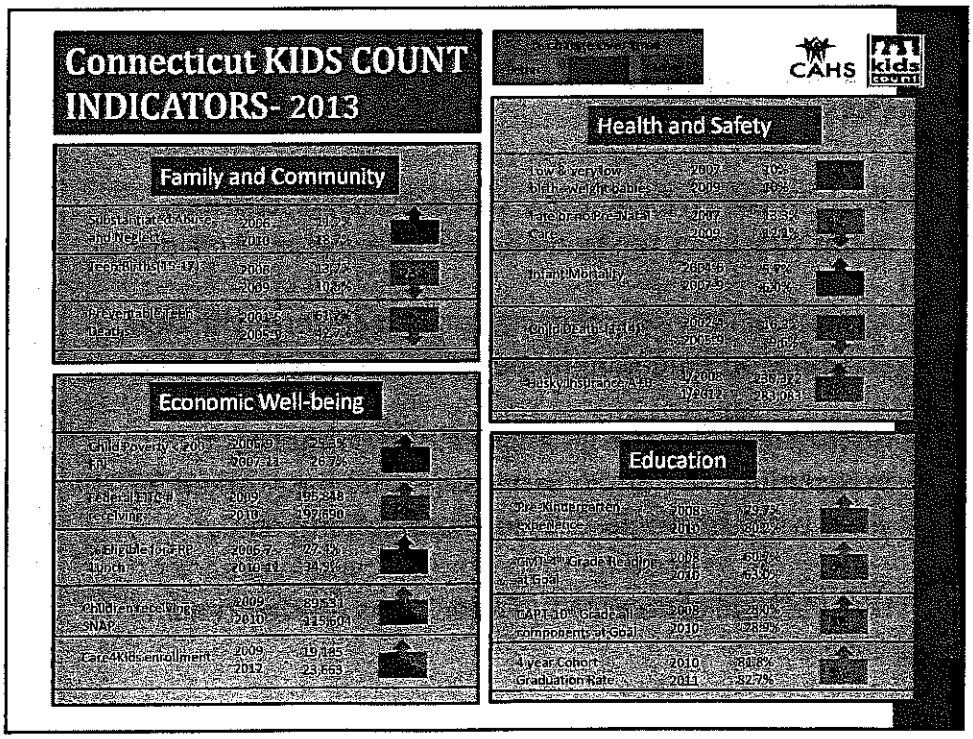
# Kids Count

What it is, How it works, Who it serves, Data needed

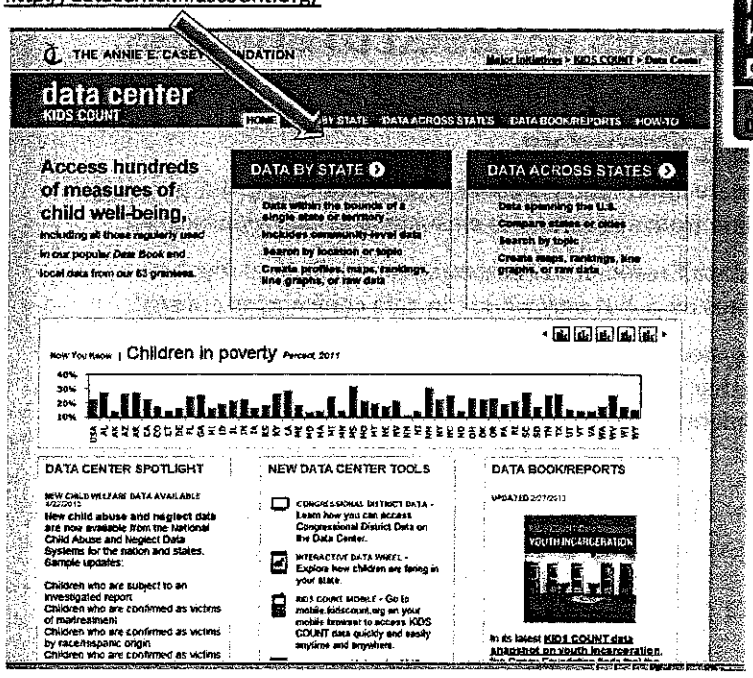
## KIDS COUNT

- **Goal**: To enrich local, state, and national discussions about strategies to secure better futures for all children.
- **Approach**: Provide policymakers and citizens with timely, accurate, and meaningful benchmarks of child well-being
- **History in CT**: As the CT grantee, the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) has worked for 20 years with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and our colleagues to use data to inform policymakers about the real-life implications of their decisions on children and families.


Data Process Cycle
Identify data sources
Develop relationships with data partners
Collect data that gives a comprehensive picture of child wellbeing
Evaluate the reliability and quality of data – collection, source, relevance
Analyze the data
Present data in a user friendly format; solicit feedback
Provide context to data to assure accurate interpretation by consumers
Generate ideas for new indicators relevant to children
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING
EDUCATION
HEALTH
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY


Connecticut KIDS COUNT INDICATORS- 2013
CAHS
kids count
Family and Community
Economic Well-being
Health and Safety
Education

http://datacenter.kidscount.org/

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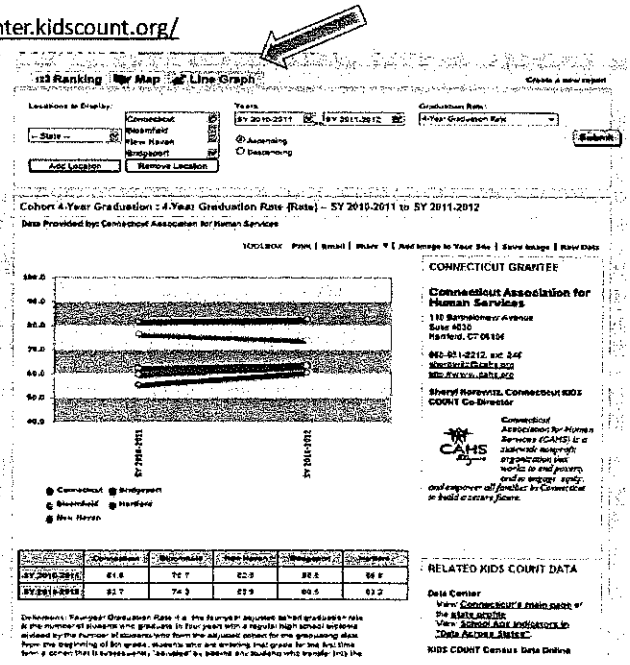

# Data issues we need to address:

- Accessing timely data
  - Up-to date information is not always available–e.g. out of network, long time from acquisition to cleaning to distribution/posting.
  - Limited staff resources to accommodate individual requests- (Websites help, but only when the data conforms to criteria).
  - Some systems are antiquated- data are transmitted as images rather than electronic data requiring time consuming manipulation.

# Data issues we need to address:

- Reliability and Accuracy of Data
  - Differences in triggers for data suppression between measures- (e.g. some measures require suppression for town data < 5 others < 10)
  - Year to year requests may be interpreted differently, use different datasets or criteria leading to different output – (e.g. events vs. unique individuals, point in time vs. monthly averages vs. yearly mean). MOU's can help with this problem but are not easily obtained.
  - Small changes in methodology or changes in measures break a series and compromise trending.
  - Relevancy of reporting levels. Data may need to be disaggregated and re-aggregated to get—neighborhoods, towns, schools and districts (e.g. Breakfast data)
  - Inconsistencies and gaps in reporting data– (e.g. Homeless student data from towns)
  - Idiosyncratic errors in the data- derive from many sources, but require time and resources to diagnose and correct.

# Why have a data advisory committee?

- To develop relationships with key stakeholders (researchers, child advocates, state and city agency staff, interested community) who work on or with data on children's issues.
- Inform on our efforts: Connect important issues to data, identify indicators, understand nuances of datasets, how to report the results, and disseminate them.
- Monitor concerns and issues with data tracking, quality, and relevance.
- Work on ways to improve access to data, coordination, consistency and reliability of reporting.