

**For Immediate Release**

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**NEW REPORT FINDS CHILD POVERTY HAS SURGED IN MIDWEST  
SINCE 2000; CHILDREN WITH WORKING PARENTS ESPECIALLY HARD HIT**

**Action Needed to Address Increasing Economic Vulnerability of America's Children**

NEW YORK, August 7, 2006 – While overall child poverty in the United States has risen dramatically since 2000, a new report by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) reveals that children and families in some regions have been harder hit than others. The report, “The New Poor: Regional Trends in Child Poverty,” finds the greatest increase in child poverty among working families in the Midwest.

“Our political leaders talk about how strong our economy is, but this report shows clearly that families in all regions of the United States are struggling to make ends meet,” said Dr. Nancy K. Cauthen, NCCP’s Deputy Director. “The story from the Midwest makes it painfully obvious that work at low wages is not enough to keep families out of poverty. It’s time we address the challenges associated with low-wage work.”

Although child poverty has increased 12% nationally since 2000, the rise in the Midwest was a stunning 29%—by far the most substantial of any region. Accounting for nearly half of the increase nationwide, the Midwest was the only region where poverty increased among children with employed parents, due in part to the loss of relatively well-paid manufacturing jobs.

Child poverty increased in the Northeast by 11% and in the South by 9%. In the Northeast, the increase was greatest among white children, whereas in the South, the most substantial increase was among children of immigrants. The child poverty rate in the West remained virtually unchanged.

“Policymakers, especially at the national level, have been slow to acknowledge that more working Americans are economically insecure because of low wages, few benefits, and minimal job protections,” said Dr. Cauthen. “If employers can’t—or won’t—take care of American workers, government needs to step up to the plate.”

The report calls for policy solutions that both strengthen regional economies and address the wide-ranging problems associated with low-wage work. NCCP points to a number of immediate policy changes that would improve conditions for low-wage workers and their children, including raising the minimum wage, enacting or expanding state earned income tax credits, restoring immigrants’ access to health care, and strengthening Unemployment Insurance.

When the Census Bureau releases the newest poverty statistics at the end of August, NCCP will ascertain if these trends continued in 2005.

To read the full report, *The New Poor: Regional Trends in Child Poverty Since 2000*, visit [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org).

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*The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is the nation’s leading public policy center dedicated to promoting the economic security, health, and well-being of America’s low-income families and children. Part of Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health, NCCP uses research to inform policy and practice with the goal of ensuring positive outcomes for the next generation.*