

City of Wilmington  
Delaware

JAMES M. BAKER  
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Dear Friends:

Sometimes, numbers tell stories just as well as words do. The important book that you are reading now does just that.

The Wilmington KIDS COUNT Fact Book 2005 tells us that we are making progress in improving conditions for children living in the City of Wilmington. And it also tells us that much remains to be done.

This is the fourth edition of the Fact Book and, like the editions published in 1999, 2001 and 2003, this volume provides information that will raise awareness; help leaders of government, business and nonprofit organizations make informed decisions to benefit our children; and give everyone in the community the data they need to advocate and monitor progress toward improving outcomes for Wilmington's children, youth, and families.

This report offers many positives. For example, the teen birth rate is declining, especially among black teenagers. So those numbers tell a good story – that more teenagers are recognizing that they will get a better start in their adult lives if they finish school and find jobs before they become parents.

Some numbers are troubling, most notably that more of our young people are becoming participants in and victims of violent criminal activity. We must continue to work to make our City safer and to find ways to prevent a young person from turning to crime and violence.

Other statistics point to hope in areas of continuing concern. For example, more women are seeking prenatal care – an indicator that our newborns are more likely to be healthier. However, black infants are still almost three times as likely as white infants to die before their first birthday. We must do more to make sure that they and their mothers get the medical care they need.

As you read the latest edition of the Wilmington KIDS COUNT Fact Book, you will find more numbers that tell important stories about our children and our hopes for their future.

I am sure you will join me in thanking the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the host of Wilmingtonians and Delawareans who care enough about our children to assemble this book. Once again, they have demonstrated that our kids count! Now it is up to us to use this report as a launching pad for new ideas and a fresh commitment to produce stronger, happier, and healthier children in Wilmington.

Sincerely,

James M. Baker  
Mayor