TITLE: Changing Disparities in Child Well-Being across Income Groups in the U.S.: 1985-2008

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The income available in children’s families can profoundly impact child

well-being. This paper presents the first-ever research to analyze trends in

well-being for children in the U.S. with vastly different economic resources.

The aim is portray changing disparities across the years spanning 1985-2008 in

key indicators and domains that form the Foundation of Child Development (FCD)

Child Well-Being Index (CWI).

To accomplish this, the research classifies children as belonging to one of

five family income quintile groups, where children are included in the 1st,

2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th quintile, depending on whether the incomes of their

families are among the lowest 20%, the next-to-lowest 20%, the middle 20%, the

next-to-highest 20%, or the highest 20% of the family income distribution.

Thus, during each year of the study period, one-fifth of children are

classified as belonging to each income quintile.

The FCD Child Well-Being Index (CWI) is based on 28 statistical indicators in

seven domains (Land, Lamb, and Mustillo, 2001). Data for a portion of these

indicators are collected in a fashion that allows children to be classified

according to their family income. Such data are available for four of the

seven domains, namely, family economic well-being, health, community

involvement, and social relationships.

Both indicators for the social relationships domain and three of the four

indicators for the family economic well-being domain are available for this

report, as are three of the six health domain indicators and two of the five

community involvement domain indicators. Thus, this report presents results

for all 10 of the 28 indicators included in the FCD Child Well-Being Index

(CWI) for which it is possible with available data to classify children

according to their family income.

Land, K.C., Lamb, V.L., & Mustillo, S.K. (2001). Child and youth well-being in

the United States, 1975-1988: Some findings from a new Index,” Social

Indicators Research 56: 241-320.