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Contact:

Katie Peters
202.657.0685 (office)
202.445.4312 (mobile)
katiep@firstfocus.net

Washington DC- Today, the U.S. Census Bureau released new data showing that the number of children living in poverty continues its steady increase, claiming an additional 1.8 million children from 2008-2009. And while the number of adults living without health insurance significantly increased over the last year, the uninsured rate for children did not. The Census report shows that in 2009, 15.5 million children were living in poverty and 7.5 million were without health insurance.

CHILD HEALTH

The year 2009 saw the number of children without health insurance rise slightly from 7.3 million children in 2008 to 7.5 million children. This represents 10 percent of the child population living without insurance, up from 9.9 percent in 2008. While this change is categorized by the Census Bureau as statistically insignificant, it is important to note that the increase comes at the same period when the uninsured rate of adults over the age of 18 rose by 1.8 percent. In other words, the uninsured rate of adults increased at a magnitude 18 times greater than that of kids.

"Despite the devastating impact of the recession which has produced serious increases in child poverty, and an increasingly high number of adults without health insurance, the uninsured rate for children remained flat," said **Bruce Lesley**, president of the bipartisan child advocacy group, **First Focus**. "This is entirely due to the overwhelming success of Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and highlights once again that targeted federal investments in the health care safety net make a huge difference in the lives of children. We are pleased that Medicaid and CHIP allowed us to hold the line on numbers of uninsured kids but, with over 7.5 million kids living without insurance, there is more work to be done."

CHILD POVERTY

The Census data indicates that 20.7 percent of children living in the U.S. are in poverty, as compared to 19 percent in 2008. Since the start of the recession in 2007, the child poverty rate has grown by 2.7 percent. However, the national percentage of all Americans living in poverty has increased from 13.2 percent to 14.3 percent of the total population, meaning that in 2009, 35.5 percent of all people living in poverty were children.

"The fact that more than one in five American children is living in poverty necessitates a long-term child poverty reduction strategy," Lesley added. "The federal government must lead the effort to halve this figure over the next decade. Children disproportionately bear the brunt of increases in poverty, and its impact on their lives negatively effects their well-being and future development.

"With so many families continuing to struggle in the wake of the recession, it is imperative that Congress and the President move now to ensure the continuity of much-needed services that are of immense value to low-income and unemployed families with children. These services include the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, Child Support Enforcement, nutritional assistance, and access to the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax credit."

Since the start of the recession, advocates have been predicting the escalation of poverty in America using the increased number of families dependent on nutritional assistance as a bellwether. A [report released by First Focus in January of 2010](#) revealed that roughly 3.4 million more children were receiving SNAP benefits (formerly known as Food Stamps) in August