

CASE STUDY

Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Initiative

“ORS Impact has been an invaluable partner helping Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT and its national network of state advocates sharpen their thinking and improve the success of their advocacy work on behalf of children.”

~ Jann Jackson, Senior Associate for Policy Reform and Advocacy, Annie E. Casey Foundation

Thanks to its work with ORS Impact, KIDS COUNT is undertaking a system-wide pivot aimed at boosting its ability to improve the lives of America’s most vulnerable children.

“ORS brought a powerful set of tools and practices to increase the chance of changing outcomes for kids and families,” says Jann Jackson, Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Senior Associate for Policy Reform and Advocacy.

One of Annie E. Casey Foundation’s premier initiatives, KIDS COUNT is a highly respected source of unbiased information about the health and wellbeing of our nation’s children.

ORS Impact’s early work with members of the KIDS COUNT statewide network suggested that data alone did not drive the changes for vulnerable children that KIDS COUNT officials hoped to see.

ORS’s Theory of Change framework delivered fresh perspectives at all levels -- for the KIDS COUNT statewide advocacy organizations (the grantees) and the KIDS COUNT Initiative team (the grantmaker), Jann says. “They started by asking, ‘Why are we doing what we are doing?’ and, ‘Why do we think it will change outcomes for vulnerable children and families?’ ”

With ORS’s guidance, KIDS COUNT has revised its assumptions about how change happens. As a result, leaders are refocusing their efforts to build on their proven success as a trusted resource for data while strengthening alliances with other similar advocacy groups. In addition, they’re exploring ways to deliver hard-hitting messages to rally public momentum that will drive policy changes to protect vulnerable children and their families nationwide.

“We updated our Theory of Change,” Jann says, “and found a very powerful story to tell our other national partners, to share with the leadership of the (Annie E. Casey) Foundation, and people are really excited. We see the power of Theory of Change work.”