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KIDS COUNT[®] DATA BOOK

STATE TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

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In addition, the KIDS COUNT Network — with members representing every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (see pages 44–45) — is instrumental in making the *Data Book* available to national, state and local leaders across the country.



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FOREWORD



FROM LISA M. HAMILTON

President and Chief Executive Officer, The Annie E. Casey Foundation

When families have accessible, affordable, quality child care, kids and parents benefit. Young children can find nurturing support and begin early learning, while their parents and caregivers are able to earn money for food, housing and other essentials. A functional child care system that meets the needs of families would ensure parents have care when and where they need it — at a reasonable cost and with family-supporting pay for child care professionals.

We do not have anything close to such a child care system in America. It has long been characterized by high and rising costs, waitlists and access challenges for families, precarious operating conditions for providers and low wages for workers. The system was broken before COVID-19, but the pandemic made things worse and key temporary federal support for families has expired, lessening many families' ability to afford care.

Too many of those raising children are unable to secure care that is compatible with work schedules and commutes. High costs burden families, yet child care workers themselves, virtually all women and disproportionately women of color, are poorly paid and often unsupported on the job. Parents and workers struggle, as do employers: Valuable contributors leave the workforce because they cannot find child care. And young children themselves — our most precious resource, on whose future America's economy and democracy depend — are missing out on care and early education during a period of important brain development.

The need for a child care system that works for families and providers is urgent. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 34th annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, which assesses child well-being nationally and state by state, presents an opportunity to examine the child care system and to explore ways to improve it.

WHY DOES CHILD CARE MATTER?

Child care matters to the kids who are in care. Young children are born ready to learn and to interact with the world. Research shows the brain develops best in safe settings that are without intense stress. Comforting interactions and stable relationships with responsive adults are the main ways to promote healthy development; that begins with parents, but it can also include child care professionals and early educators.¹

Also, access to early childhood education — preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds — is invaluable in preparing young learners for elementary school, which is why it is one of the 16 indicators that make up the KIDS COUNT index in each year's *Data Book*. Despite gains in recent years, our country is still failing to deliver early childhood education to more than half of its children (54%, a one-point increase over the previous measurement).

Child care also affects parents' ability to support their families. In 2021, 23 million

children ages 5 and younger lived in the United States.² Not all parents need child care, but most people participating in the American workforce have children and many will access child care for a portion of their careers. In 2021, some 53% of working adults ages 25 to 54 were parents, and more than a third of those parents (37%) had young children.³ If you can't find care for your young child, you can't go to work, and that undercuts your family's ability to be self-sufficient.

Beyond individual kids and families, child care affects the current and future health of the American economy. Even adults whose children are grown or who have no children at all have a stake in improving the system. According to one estimate, shortcomings of the child care system cost the U.S. economy \$122 billion a year through lost earnings, productivity and tax revenue.⁴ In the near term, we lose what parents who can't work would be contributing to the economy; in the long term, research indicates children with access to quality care at the earliest ages are more successful in school, giving them a boost in the journey toward employment.⁵

WHY CHILD CARE IS SO HARD TO ACCESS

Access to care is driven largely by the number of child care workers. The already insufficient workforce dropped by more than a third in two months as the pandemic took hold, from nearly 1.1 million workers in February 2020 to 677,000 in April. It had rebounded by April 2023 to 996,000.⁶ Although supplemented by family, friends and neighbors who offer unpaid care, the existing "workforce behind the workforce" cannot deliver the quantity of care the market demands.⁷

Another determining factor is whether care is available where and when it is needed. The

number of working parents and caregivers who said child care problems forced them to miss work in the previous week had never been higher than 60,000 before the pandemic. However, that threshold was eclipsed repeatedly beginning in 2020, hitting a record 104,000 in October 2022.⁸ The National Survey of Children's Health reports that 13% of children birth to age 5 (2.8 million) had a family member who faced work challenges due to child care (see Figure 1). More than half of working parents with infants or toddlers reported having been late to work or leaving early at least once in the previous three months due to child care problems and almost a quarter (23%) have, at some point, been fired for it.⁹

Child or provider illnesses account for some of this missed work, but not all of it. Too often, parents can't access care because it is far away or not reachable by public transit.¹⁰ Moreover, 26 to 38 million adults are shift workers, subject to unpredictable hours, night shifts and last-minute changes that complicate their ability to lock in care.¹¹ Home-based providers are more likely to be open nights and weekends when shift workers, single parents and parents who are students need them.¹²

While child care centers and school readiness programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start are important pieces of the puzzle, most workers caring for the youngest children are working out of homes with varying degrees of regulation. Although 62% of kids ages 5 and younger who were in care in 2019 were in child care centers, that share was only 47% for 1- to 2-year-olds and 32% for children younger than 12 months.¹³ Settings with the youngest children who need the most care are required to have the lowest caregiver-to-child ratios, so although there are more children in centers, less than a third of care professionals work in centers or classrooms.¹⁴

THE BROKEN CHILD CARE MARKET

Even when accessibility is not an issue, affordability is likely to be. Why is child care so expensive? Why can't people afford to work or operate a business in the child care field? The answers to these questions are related. Think of them as two sides of the same extremely pricey coin.

Why Parents Struggle to Pay for Child Care

Simply put, the reason parents have a tough time covering the cost of child care is that it is very expensive — and reflects long-standing inequities.

According to an analysis by the advocacy organization Child Care Aware, the average annual cost of care for one child in America was \$10,600 in 2021 — one-tenth of a couple's average income or more than a third (35%) of a single parent's income.¹⁵ The U.S. Department of Labor estimated that median costs in 2022 ranged from \$5,357 a year for home-based school-age care in rural communities, to \$17,171 for center-based infant care in major population centers.¹⁶ Child Care Aware also has estimated that center-based infant care costs more per year than in-state tuition at a public university in 34 states and the District of Columbia.¹⁷ (See Table 1 for a comparison of prices relative to median household incomes in each state.) Child care costs have risen 220% since the publication of the first *KIDS COUNT Data Book* in 1990, significantly outpacing inflation.¹⁸



TABLE 1:
CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY AND JOB CHANGES DUE TO CHILD CARE PROBLEMS BY STATE

LOCATION	CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE FOR TODDLERS			FAMILY- OR HOME-BASED CARE FOR TODDLERS			CHILDREN WHOSE FAMILY HAD JOB CHANGES DUE TO CHILD CARE PROBLEMS*
	ANNUAL COST	COST AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN INCOME		ANNUAL COST	COST AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN INCOME		
		SINGLE MOTHER	MARRIED COUPLE WITH CHILDREN		SINGLE MOTHER	MARRIED COUPLE WITH CHILDREN	
United States	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	13%
Alabama	\$7,501	30%	8%	\$6,053	24%	6%	10%
Alaska	\$13,046	33%	11%	\$8,919	23%	8%	13%
Arizona	\$10,883	31%	11%	\$6,253	18%	6%	16%
Arkansas	\$6,806	25%	8%	\$5,482	20%	6%	15%
California	\$13,408	36%	11%	\$11,607	31%	10%	15%
Colorado	\$16,333	41%	14%	\$11,551	29%	10%	14%
Connecticut	\$18,156	49%	13%	\$11,955	32%	9%	15%
Delaware	\$11,695	34%	10%	\$8,386	24%	7%	13%
District of Columbia	\$24,396	73%	11%	\$19,291	58%	9%	14%
Florida	\$8,678	26%	9%	\$7,555	23%	8%	13%
Georgia	\$8,230	26%	8%	\$6,968	22%	7%	7%
Hawaii	\$13,919	35%	12%	\$9,776	25%	8%	12%
Idaho	\$7,675	25%	9%	\$6,450	21%	7%	10%
Illinois	\$12,470	37%	11%	\$8,943	27%	8%	15%
Indiana	\$7,884	26%	8%	\$7,884	26%	8%	9%
Iowa	\$10,437	33%	10%	\$6,823	21%	6%	14%
Kansas	\$8,074	26%	8%	\$5,706	18%	6%	12%
Kentucky	\$7,162	27%	8%	\$6,362	24%	7%	12%
Louisiana	\$7,306	30%	7%	\$5,454	22%	5%	8%
Maine	\$10,923	32%	10%	\$8,798	26%	8%	15%
Maryland	\$11,090	25%	8%	\$9,551	22%	7%	12%
Massachusetts	\$19,961	53%	13%	\$13,344	35%	9%	12%
Michigan	\$11,309	37%	11%	\$7,496	25%	7%	14%
Minnesota	\$14,607	38%	12%	\$9,081	23%	7%	11%
Mississippi	\$4,382	19%	5%	\$4,030	17%	5%	12%
Missouri	\$8,862	28%	9%	\$6,785	22%	7%	10%
Montana	\$8,680	29%	9%	\$7,093	24%	7%	12%
Nebraska	\$10,422	31%	10%	\$7,505	22%	7%	6%
Nevada	\$13,877	38%	15%	\$10,511	29%	11%	13%
New Hampshire	\$12,496	31%	9%	\$9,940	25%	8%	14%
New Jersey	\$12,694	34%	9%	\$9,786	26%	7%	12%
New Mexico	\$9,156	33%	11%	\$10,284	37%	12%	12%
New York	\$16,551	48%	14%	\$11,778	34%	10%	13%
North Carolina	\$9,916	33%	10%	\$8,316	28%	8%	16%
North Dakota	\$10,090	30%	9%	\$7,580	23%	7%	8%
Ohio	\$11,302	39%	11%	\$8,761	30%	8%	13%
Oklahoma	\$8,339	30%	9%	\$7,253	26%	8%	12%
Oregon	\$13,007	37%	12%	\$7,640	22%	7%	15%
Pennsylvania	\$11,346	35%	10%	\$8,947	28%	8%	12%
Rhode Island	\$13,462	38%	12%	\$10,068	28%	9%	11%
South Carolina	\$8,658	30%	9%	\$6,747	24%	7%	15%
South Dakota	\$7,167	23%	7%	\$5,403	17%	5%	10%
Tennessee	\$7,934	27%	8%	\$6,696	23%	7%	12%
Texas	\$8,718	28%	9%	\$7,933	25%	8%	12%
Utah	\$9,003	24%	9%	\$7,684	20%	8%	13%
Vermont	\$12,959	37%	12%	\$9,879	28%	9%	16%
Virginia	\$11,579	32%	9%	\$8,843	25%	7%	8%
Washington	\$14,355	39%	12%	\$11,620	31%	10%	12%
West Virginia	\$7,955	35%	9%	\$6,251	27%	7%	13%
Wisconsin	\$12,415	36%	11%	\$9,766	29%	9%	9%
Wyoming	\$7,864	25%	8%	\$7,711	24%	7%	10%

Sources: National Database of Childcare Prices, 2022 estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017–2021; and National Survey of Children’s Health, 2020–2021.¹⁹

*Job changes include quitting a job, not taking a job or greatly changing a job in the previous year. N.A.: Not available

Governments do little to help families afford child care. The main federal mechanism for subsidizing care, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, partially offsets costs for only 1.3 million of the more than 12 million kids in child care.²⁰ These payments also are difficult and time-consuming to access for child care businesses and for families: Of children eligible for subsidies under federal rules, only 1 in 6 receives them,²¹ and research indicates providers serving predominantly Black communities face disparities in subsidy amounts.²²

The shortcomings of the child care system disproportionately affect the financial well-being of women, single parents, parents in poverty, families of color and immigrant families.²³ An analysis of 2017 data indicated center-based care for two children absorbed 26% of a white working mother’s median household income, but that figure was 42% for Latino, 51% for American Indian or Alaska Native and 56% for Black working mothers.²⁴

Parents tend to need child care earlier in their career when lower salaries match their limited experience. This hurts young parents balancing school and work, especially the vast majority who receive no subsidies. They spend an average of 14% of their household income on child care, twice the share the federal government recommends.²⁵

Women’s employment has finally returned to pre-pandemic levels, meaning many women forced out of work because of COVID-19 are once again on the job.²⁶ While child care has long been an issue for parents, it’s particularly challenging for women. Researchers estimate women were *five to eight times more likely* than men to experience negative employment consequences related to caregiving in 2022.²⁷ Family economic mobility is sorely restricted when uncertainty surrounds child care.

**FIGURE 1:
U.S. CHILDREN (AGES 5 AND YOUNGER)
WHOSE FAMILY HAD JOB CHANGES DUE
TO CHILD CARE PROBLEMS BY RACE AND
ETHNICITY, FAMILY STRUCTURE AND INCOME:
2020–2021**

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Total	2,830,000	13%

RACE AND ETHNICITY

American Indian	10,000	9%
Asian and Pacific Islander	160,000	14%
Black	490,000	17%
Latino	880,000	16%
White	1,100,000	10%
Two or More Races	200,000	13%

FAMILY STRUCTURE

Two parents	2,050,000	12%
Single parent	700,000	15%
Single mother	600,000	16%
Single father	100,000	11%
Grandparent or other relation	90,000	9%

FAMILY INCOME

Low income (below 200% of poverty)	1,320,000	15%
Higher income (at or above 200% of poverty)	1,510,000	11%

Source: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2020–2021.

NOTES: Figures only include children birth to age 5. Racial and ethnic categories are mutually exclusive. Due to rounding, numbers presented may not add up to the total provided.

Why Running a Child Care Business Costs So Much When Workers Are Paid So Little

The flip side of the affordability coin is the cost of *providing* child care. Labor costs can account for more than 80% of a child care provider's expenses, and caregiver-to-child ratios are mandated by law and implemented for safety, so there is little flexibility on price.²⁸ Child care businesses are already surviving on profit margins that are typically less than 1%.²⁹ And the modest subsidies states pay to family child care providers are lower than those paid to center-based and large group care in all but two states.³⁰ This boxes in existing child care business owners and discourages the entry of new providers into the market, a major concern in a sector that has lost thousands of providers and tens of thousands of workers since the pandemic began.³¹

High costs affect wages, which are woefully low. Child care workers make less than workers in 98% of our nation's other professions, despite the vital role they play in preparing the next generation to thrive.³² The median pay for child care workers, who typically must hold a range of credentials, was \$28,520 per year or \$13.71 an hour in 2022, less than customer service representatives (\$18.16), retail sales positions (\$14.26) and restaurant jobs (\$14) that don't require the same level of education.³³ Given that 1 in every 100 workers in the United States makes a living caring for children, these low wages ripple and create community-wide disparities.³⁴ Ninety-four percent of child care workers are women; 14% are Black and 4% are Asian, and across all races, 24% described their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.³⁵

With wages as low as they are, child care centers battle sluggish hiring and high turnover.³⁶ According to one survey, staffing

shortages have left those within the field "more stressed" (85%) and "exhausted/burnt out" (75%). These shortages were a factor for the more than one-third of owners and operators who said they were considering shutting down.³⁷ The same survey revealed more than 60% of child care providers had difficulty paying their own food and utility bills in the most recent month.³⁸

POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Child care is a policy thicket that has vexed the country for decades. A quarter century ago, the *1998 KIDS COUNT Data Book* focused on this issue, and the same concerns raised then plague the system today. One important difference is that leaders have very recent, clear evidence of approaches that work. According to an analysis of the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, the economic stimulus bill passed in the middle of the pandemic, \$40 billion in funds for families and the child care sector helped head off 75,000 permanent child care center closures, preserving 3 million child care spots.³⁹ Unfortunately, temporary pandemic-era aid has not been converted into permanent solutions.

What is missing on both the supply and demand sides of the child care equation is a long-term commitment to stabilizing this critical infrastructure. As we have seen, an infusion of resources from the federal government had a direct and measurable effect on the health of the sector. The United States is distinct among advanced economies for its paltry support of early childhood care: \$500 per child per year compared to a \$14,000 average across countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development whose data

were available.⁴⁰ The gap is attributable in large part to a lack of guaranteed paid family leave in the United States.

Transitioning from a faltering child care system to a flourishing one will take new thinking and investment at the local, state and national levels. These ideas should be informed by listening to parents and providers themselves to learn which improvements to the system would be most beneficial to them. An executive order issued by President Biden in April 2023, aimed at expanding access, lowering costs and raising wages,⁴¹ could prove to be a helpful framework, but more is needed.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation encourages policymakers to take action:

- **Federal, state and local governments should invest more money in child care.** State and local governments should maximize remaining ARPA dollars to fund needed child care services and capacity, enabling all parents to work. Congress should reauthorize and strengthen the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act and increase funding for public prekindergarten and Head Start. Agencies at every level should streamline and simplify the process of qualifying for and receiving subsidies.
- **Public and private leaders should work together to improve the infrastructure for home-based child care, beginning by increasing access to startup and expansion capital for new providers.** Governments should review regulations to make sure they are not erecting unnecessary obstacles to opening home child care businesses and look for ways to better support those already in operation.⁴² Policymakers can also encourage the development of staffed family child care networks, which bring providers together to reduce isolation, take advantage of

professional development and find help navigating complicated bureaucracies.

- **To help young parents, Congress should expand the federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School program, which serves student parents.** Governments also can encourage the higher education and business communities to take steps such as co-locating child care at work and learning sites to reduce transportation challenges.

America has never had a functional child care system. It is past time for our leaders to build one. When child care works, kids can have positive early experiences and parents can pursue family-supporting careers. The millions of businesses that employ the parents of young children — as well as home- and center-based child care operations themselves — can hire, sustain and develop their workforces and grow the economy. Policymakers must take long-overdue steps to make child care in America more accessible, affordable and equitable to give kids and their caregivers — along with child care workers — the best opportunity to thrive. Our nation’s future depends on it. ■



TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING



Since 1990, the Casey Foundation has ranked states annually on overall child well-being using a selection of indicators.

Called the KIDS COUNT index, these indicators capture what children and youth need most to thrive in four domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. Each domain has four indicators, for a total of 16. These indicators represent the best available data to measure the status of child well-being at the state and national levels. For a more thorough

description of the KIDS COUNT index, visit www.aecf.org/resources/the-new-kids-count-index.

This year's *Data Book* presents a picture of how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted child well-being in the United States, making comparisons between 2019 and 2021 where possible. As the nation recovers from the coronavirus crisis, the latest data on the well-being of kids, youth and families can be found in the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.aecf.org.



TABLE 2: NATIONAL TRENDS

16 KEY INDICATORS OF CHILD WELL-BEING BY DOMAIN

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

	UNITED STATES		
Children in poverty US 12,243,000	17% 2019	17% 2021	= SAME
Children whose parents lack secure employment US 21,143,000	26% 2019	29% 2021	↑ WORSE
Children living in households with a high housing cost burden US 21,857,000	30% 2019	30% 2021	= SAME
Teens not in school and not working US 1,234,000	6% 2019	7% 2021	↑ WORSE

EDUCATION

	UNITED STATES		
Young children (ages 3 and 4) not in school US 4,380,000	53% 2012-16	54% 2017-21	↑ WORSE
Fourth-graders not proficient in reading US N.A.	66% 2019	68% 2022	↑ WORSE
Eighth-graders not proficient in math US N.A.	67% 2019	74% 2022	↑ WORSE
High school students not graduating on time* US N.A.	14% 2018-19	14% 2019-20	= SAME

* State educational agencies were allowed to change requirements for a high school diploma to account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore caution should be used when interpreting changes between 2019-20 and prior years of data. Due to data quality concerns and late delivery of data, the national average was calculated using imputed data for Illinois and Texas.

N.A.: Not available

HEALTH

	UNITED STATES		
Low birth-weight babies US 311,932	8.3% <small>2019</small>	8.5% <small>2021</small>	↑ WORSE
Children without health insurance US 4,165,000	6% <small>2019</small>	5% <small>2021</small>	↓ BETTER
Child and teen deaths per 100,000 US 23,198	25 <small>2019</small>	30 <small>2021</small>	↑ WORSE
Children and teens (ages 10 to 17) who are overweight or obese US N.A.	31% <small>2018-19</small>	33% <small>2020-21</small>	↑ WORSE

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

	UNITED STATES		
Children in single-parent families US 23,626,000	34% <small>2019</small>	34% <small>2021</small>	= SAME
Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma US 8,269,000	12% <small>2019</small>	11% <small>2021</small>	↓ BETTER
Children living in high-poverty areas US 6,086,000	13% <small>2012-16</small>	8% <small>2017-21</small>	↓ BETTER
Teen births per 1,000 US 146,973	17 <small>2019</small>	14 <small>2021</small>	↓ BETTER

N.A.: Not available

NATIONAL TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING

Data reveal how the COVID-19 pandemic and related federal policies affected child well-being nationally. Half of the indicators tracked in the *2023 Data Book* worsened since before the pandemic, while four stayed the same and only four saw improvement (see pages 12–13). The most recent data available show that fewer parents were economically secure, educational achievement was hit hard and more children died young than ever before. Even so, during these trying times, child poverty remained unchanged and more children than ever were insured, outcomes that demonstrate the impact policy has on child well-being.

Improvements in the Economic Well-Being domain over the past 10 years stalled with the pandemic. Since 2019, two of the Economic Well-Being indicators worsened and two saw no change. Notably, the child poverty rate remained steady through the pandemic, while more children lived with parents who lacked secure employment. Policies such as the child tax credit helped families and kept poverty in check during a time when people were struggling to find decent jobs.

Meanwhile, three of the four Education indicators worsened. The pandemic erased decades' worth of progress that the nation had made in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math proficiency. In 2022, 74% of eighth-graders were not proficient in math, the worst figure in the last two decades. There were also more young children who did not attend school and the percentage of high school students graduating on time stalled.

The Health domain saw similar results, with three of four indicators getting worse. Of particular concern is the increase in the child and teen death rate. In 2021, the child and teen death rate was 30 deaths per 100,000 children and youths ages 1 to 19, the highest rate seen since 2007, with continued increases in deaths by suicides, homicides, drug overdoses, firearms and traffic accidents. While most indicators worsened in this domain, it is worth noting that the number and percentage of children without health insurance improved between 2019 and 2021. Efforts to expand access to stable and affordable coverage helped children and families during a time when parents were losing their jobs, incomes were dropping and health-related needs were on the rise.

Trends in the Family and Community domain are mostly encouraging. The teen birth rate improved, a smaller percentage of children lived with parents who lacked a high school diploma and there was improvement in the number of children living in high-poverty communities. In 2021, the teen birth rate continued its steady decline since 2007.

Overall, the positive strides in some areas of child well-being, driven by effective policies, provide encouragement that the nation can make different choices about what it wants for children and youth and advance the work needed to build a brighter future for Generation Alpha and Generation Z.

RACIAL INEQUITIES IN CHILD WELL-BEING

The country's racial inequities remain deep, systemic and stubbornly persistent (see page 16). Data suggest that our nation fails to provide American Indian, Black and Latino children with the opportunities and support they need to thrive — and to remove the obstacles they encounter disproportionately on the road to adulthood.

As a result, nearly all index measures show that children with the same potential are experiencing disparate outcomes by race and ethnicity. A few notable exceptions: Black children were more likely than the national average to be in school as young children and to live in families in which the head of the household has at least a high school diploma. American Indian and Latino kids were more likely to be born at a healthy birth weight. Latino children and teens had a lower death rate than the national average.

As a result of generations-long inequities and discriminatory policies and practices that persist, children of color face high hurdles to success on many indicators. Black children were significantly more likely to live in

single-parent families and in poverty. American Indian kids were more than twice as likely to lack health insurance and almost three times as likely to live in neighborhoods with more limited resources than the average child. And Latino children were the most likely to be overweight or obese and live with a head of household who lacked a high school diploma.

Although Asian and Pacific Islander children tend to fare better than their peers, disaggregated data show the stark differences that exist within this population. For example, 31% of Burmese, 24% of Mongolian and 23% of Thai and Malaysian children lived in poverty compared with 11% of Asian and Pacific Islander children overall. And 61% of Burmese children lived in a family where the head of household lacked a high school diploma — more than five times the national average.⁴³

Today, kids of color represent the majority of the children in the country,⁴⁴ as well as in 14 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The future success of our nation depends on our ability to ensure all children have the chance to be successful.

NATIONAL AND STATE DATA PROFILES ONLINE

National and state profiles providing current and trend data for all 16 indicators, as well as an interactive look at the *Data Book*, are available at www.aecf.org/databook. In addition, thousands of child and family well-being indicators, including those cited in the *Data Book*, are available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.aecf.org.

TABLE 3: NATIONAL TRENDS

KEY INDICATORS BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING							
	National Average	American Indian	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White (non-Hispanic)	Two or More Races
Children in poverty 2021	17%	28%	11%	31%	23%	11%	19%
Children whose parents lack secure employment 2021	29%	43%	22%	44%	35%	22%	31%
Children living in households with a high housing cost burden 2021	30%	30%	28%	44%	39%	21%	33%
Teens not in school and not working 2021	7%	12%	4%	11%	9%	6%	8%
EDUCATION							
	National Average	American Indian	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White (non-Hispanic)	Two or More Races
Young children (ages 3 and 4) not in school 2017–21	54%	58%	51%	52%	61%	52%	57%
Fourth-graders not proficient in reading 2022	68%	82%*	45%*	84%*	80%	59%	63%*
Eighth-graders not proficient in math 2022	74%	89%*	44%*	91%*	86%	66%	73%*
High school students not graduating on time[^] 2019–20	14%	25%*	8%*	19%*	18%	10%	N.A.
HEALTH							
	National Average	American Indian	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White (non-Hispanic)	Two or More Races
Low birth-weight babies 2021	8.5%	8.2%	9.2%	14.1%	7.8%	7.0%	9.2%
Children without health insurance 2021	5%	12%	4%	5%	9%	4%	6%
Child and teen deaths per 100,000 2021	30	33	15	55	26	26	17
Children and teens (ages 10 to 17) who are overweight or obese 2020–21	33%	N.A.	24%*	40%*	43%	27%	N.A.
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY							
	National Average	American Indian	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White (non-Hispanic)	Two or More Races
Children in single-parent families 2021	34%	49%	16%	64%	42%	24%	38%
Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma 2021	11%	22%	9%	10%	26%	5%	16%
Children living in high-poverty areas 2017–21	8%	22%	4%	21%	12%	3%	8%
Teen births per 1,000 2021	14	17	3	22	21	9	14

*Data are for non-Hispanic children. N.A.: Not available

[^]Due to data quality concerns and late delivery of data, the national average was calculated using imputed data for Illinois and Texas.

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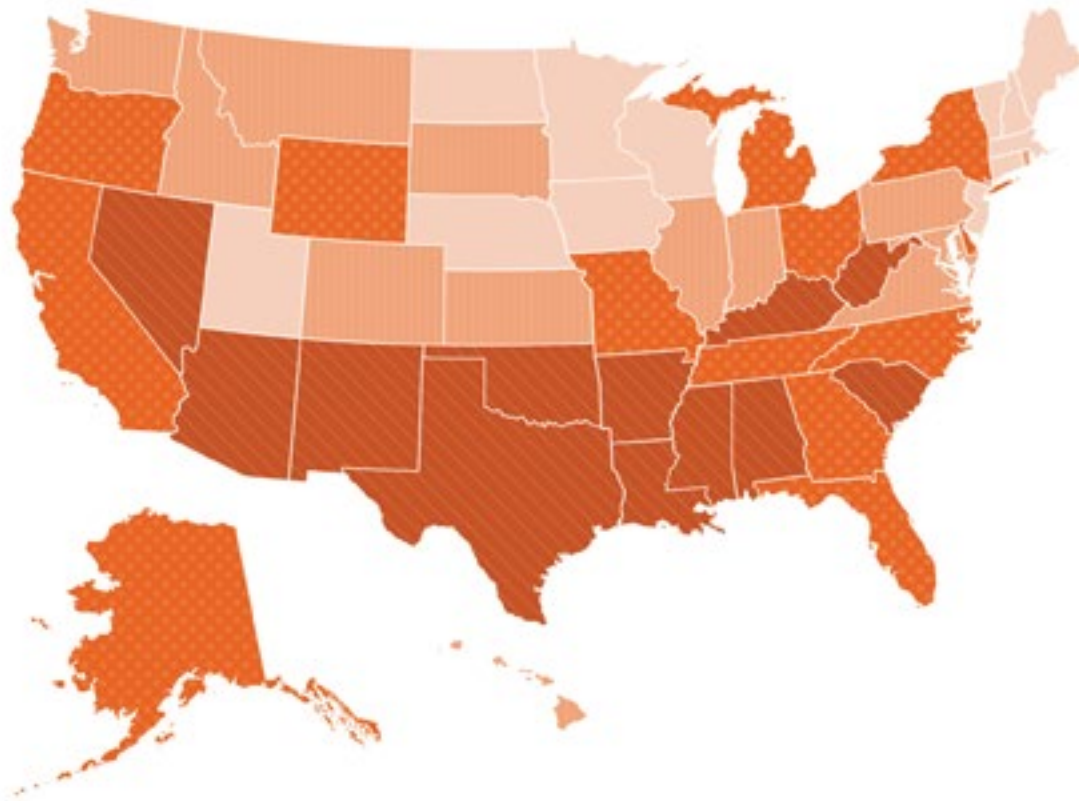




OVERALL CHILD WELL-BEING

The Foundation derives a composite index of overall child well-being for each state by combining data across four domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. These composite scores are then translated into a state ranking for child well-being.

A 2023 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF OVERALL CHILD WELL-BEING



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. New Hampshire	13. Idaho	26. Oregon	39. Arizona
2. Utah	14. Virginia	27. Wyoming	40. Kentucky
3. Massachusetts	15. Colorado	28. Missouri	41. South Carolina
4. Vermont	16. Washington	29. Ohio	42. West Virginia
5. Minnesota	17. Kansas	30. New York	43. Arkansas
6. Iowa	18. Montana	31. Florida	44. Texas
7. New Jersey	19. Illinois	32. Michigan	45. Alabama
8. Nebraska	20. Rhode Island	33. North Carolina	46. Oklahoma
9. Connecticut	21. Maryland	34. Delaware	47. Nevada
10. Wisconsin	22. Pennsylvania	35. California	48. Mississippi
11. North Dakota	23. South Dakota	36. Tennessee	49. Louisiana
12. Maine	24. Indiana	37. Georgia	50. New Mexico
	25. Hawaii	38. Alaska	

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.



National data mask a great deal of state and regional variations in child well-being. A child's chances of thriving depend not only on individual, family and community characteristics but also on the state in which they are born and raised. States vary considerably in their wealth and other resources. Policy choices and investments — or a lack thereof — by state officials and lawmakers also strongly influence children's chances for success.

This year, New England states hold two of the top three spots for overall child well-being. New Hampshire ranks first, followed by Utah and Massachusetts. Mississippi (at 48th place), Louisiana (49th) and New Mexico (50th) are the three lowest-ranked states.

The map on page 19 shows the distinct regional patterns that emerge from the state rankings. Five of the top 10 states in terms of overall child well-being are in the Northeast, including Vermont (fourth), New Jersey (seventh) and Connecticut (ninth). The Midwest has four states in the top 10, including Minnesota (fifth), Iowa (sixth), Nebraska (eighth) and Wisconsin (10th).

States in Appalachia, as well as the Southeast and Southwest — where families have the lowest levels of household income — populate the bottom of the overall rankings. In fact, except for Alaska, the 15 lowest-ranked states are in these regions.

Although they are not ranked against states, children in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico experienced some of the worst outcomes on many of the indicators the Foundation tracks. When available, the data for the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are included on pages 34–37.

In addition to differences across states, the overall rankings obscure important variations within states. Although most state rankings did not vary dramatically across domains, there are a few exceptions. For example, Hawaii ranks 44th for Economic Well-Being but eighth for Family and Community. Oregon ranks 44th in Education and seventh for Health. For all states, the index identified bright spots and room for improvement. See maps in this section to review variation in your state.

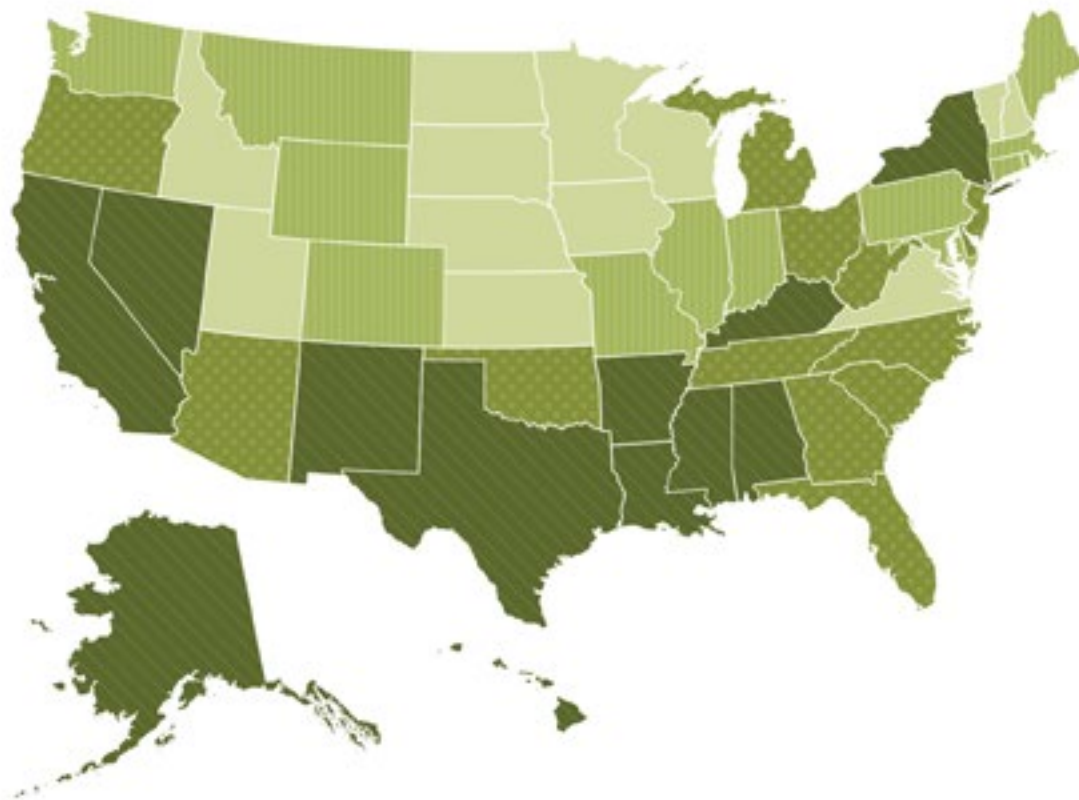




ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

To help children grow into prepared, productive adults, parents need jobs with family-sustaining pay, affordable housing and the ability to invest in their children's future. When parents are unemployed or earn low wages, their access to resources to support their kids' development is more limited, which can undermine their children's health and prospects for success in school and beyond.⁴⁵ The negative effects of poverty on kids can extend into their teenage years and young adulthood, as they are more likely to contend with issues such as teen pregnancy and failing to graduate from high school.⁴⁶

A 2023 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC WELL-BEING



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. Nebraska	13. Montana	26. Ohio	39. Texas
2. Utah	14. Maine	27. North Carolina	40. Arkansas
3. Iowa	15. Connecticut	28. Delaware	41. Kentucky
4. New Hampshire	16. Indiana	29. New Jersey	42. Alabama
5. Minnesota	17. Colorado	30. Oregon	43. California
6. North Dakota	18. Missouri	31. Tennessee	44. Hawaii
7. Kansas	19. Wyoming	32. Michigan	45. New York
8. Vermont	20. Massachusetts	33. Arizona	46. Alaska
9. South Dakota	21. Maryland	34. South Carolina	47. Mississippi
10. Wisconsin	22. Pennsylvania	35. Georgia	48. Nevada
11. Idaho	23. Illinois	36. West Virginia	49. New Mexico
12. Virginia	24. Rhode Island	37. Florida	50. Louisiana
	25. Washington	38. Oklahoma	

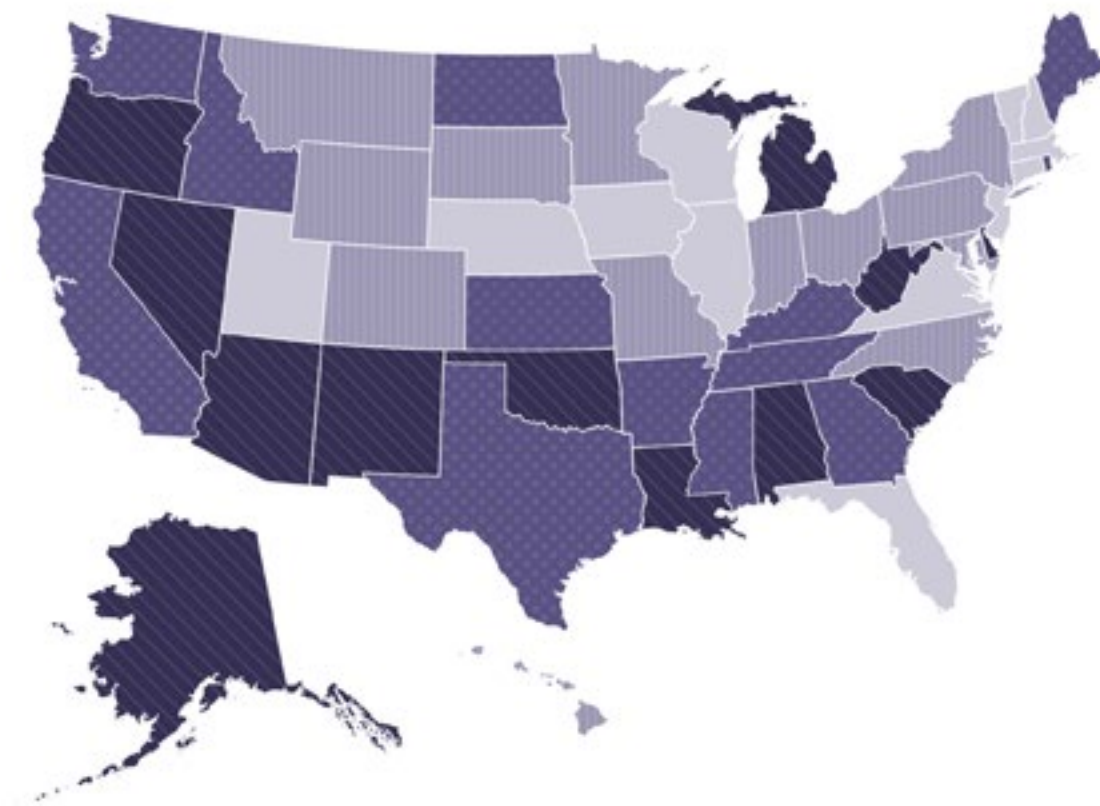
District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.



EDUCATION

The early years of a child's life lay a foundation for lifelong success. Establishing the conditions that promote educational achievement for children is critical, beginning with quality prenatal care and continuing through the early elementary years. Adolescence also represents a pivotal window for growth and developmental opportunities that equip youth to remain on track to graduate from high school, pursue postsecondary education and training and successfully transition to adulthood. Yet our country continues to have significant gaps in educational achievement by race and income along all stages of development.⁴⁷ Closing these gaps will be key to ensuring the nation's future workforce can compete on a global scale.

A 2023 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF EDUCATION



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. Massachusetts	13. Indiana	26. Kansas	39. Alabama
2. New Jersey	14. Wyoming	27. Texas	40. South Carolina
3. Connecticut	15. Colorado	28. Washington	41. Delaware
4. New Hampshire	16. New York	29. Kentucky	42. Michigan
5. Florida	17. Pennsylvania	30. Tennessee	43. Louisiana
6. Utah	18. Minnesota	31. Georgia	44. Oregon
7. Wisconsin	19. Hawaii	32. Mississippi	45. Arizona
8. Illinois	20. Ohio	33. Rhode Island	46. Nevada
9. Iowa	21. Montana	34. Maine	47. West Virginia
10. Virginia	22. Missouri	35. North Dakota	48. Alaska
11. Vermont	23. North Carolina	36. California	49. Oklahoma
12. Nebraska	24. South Dakota	37. Arkansas	50. New Mexico
	25. Maryland	38. Idaho	

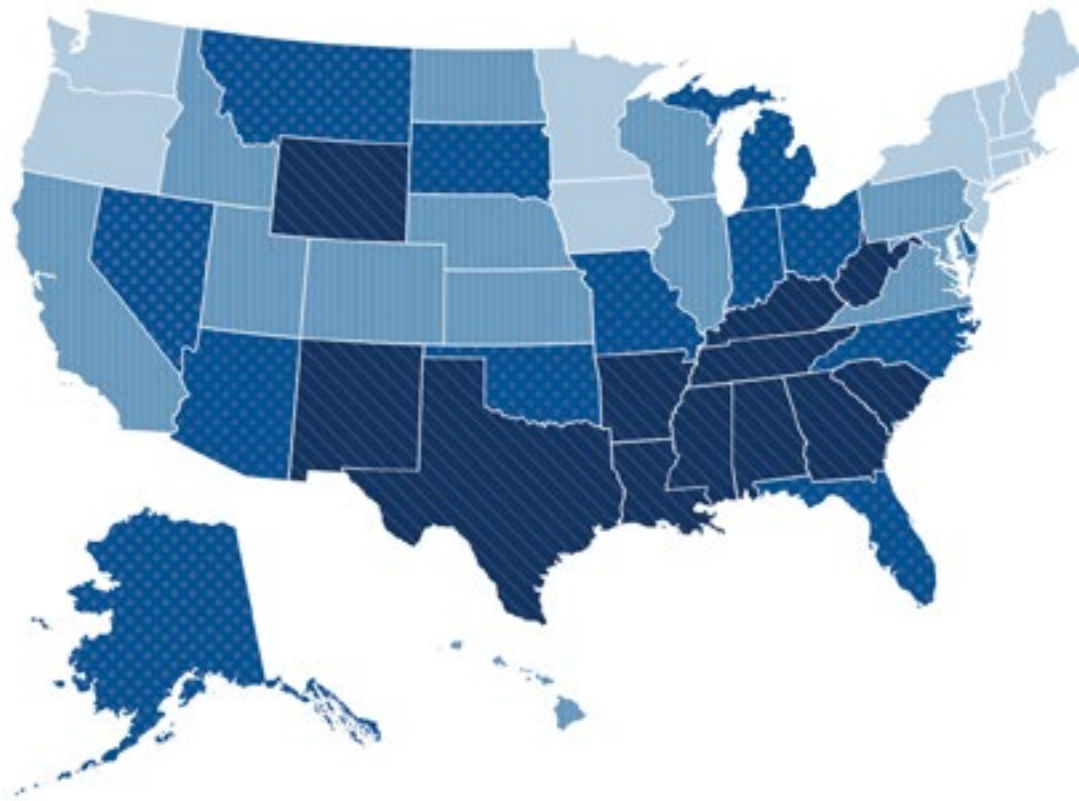
District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.



HEALTH

Children's good health is fundamental to their overall development, and ensuring kids are born healthy is the first step toward improving their chances in life. Exposure to violence, family stress, inadequate housing, lack of preventive health care, poor nutrition, poverty and substance abuse undermine children's health. Poor health in childhood affects other critical aspects of children's lives, such as school readiness and attendance, and can have lasting consequences on their future health and well-being.

A 2023 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF HEALTH



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. Massachusetts	13. Hawaii	26. Michigan	39. West Virginia
2. Vermont	14. California	27. Alaska	40. Kentucky
3. New Hampshire	15. Nebraska	28. Ohio	41. Tennessee
4. Minnesota	16. Wisconsin	29. Indiana	42. Arkansas
5. New Jersey	17. Idaho	30. Montana	43. Georgia
6. Washington	18. Utah	31. Delaware	44. New Mexico
7. Oregon	19. North Dakota	32. Arizona	45. Alabama
8. Rhode Island	20. Pennsylvania	33. Florida	46. Wyoming
9. New York	21. Colorado	34. North Carolina	47. South Carolina
10. Maine	22. Kansas	35. Missouri	48. Texas
11. Iowa	23. Illinois	36. South Dakota	49. Louisiana
12. Connecticut	24. Maryland	37. Oklahoma	50. Mississippi
	25. Virginia	38. Nevada	

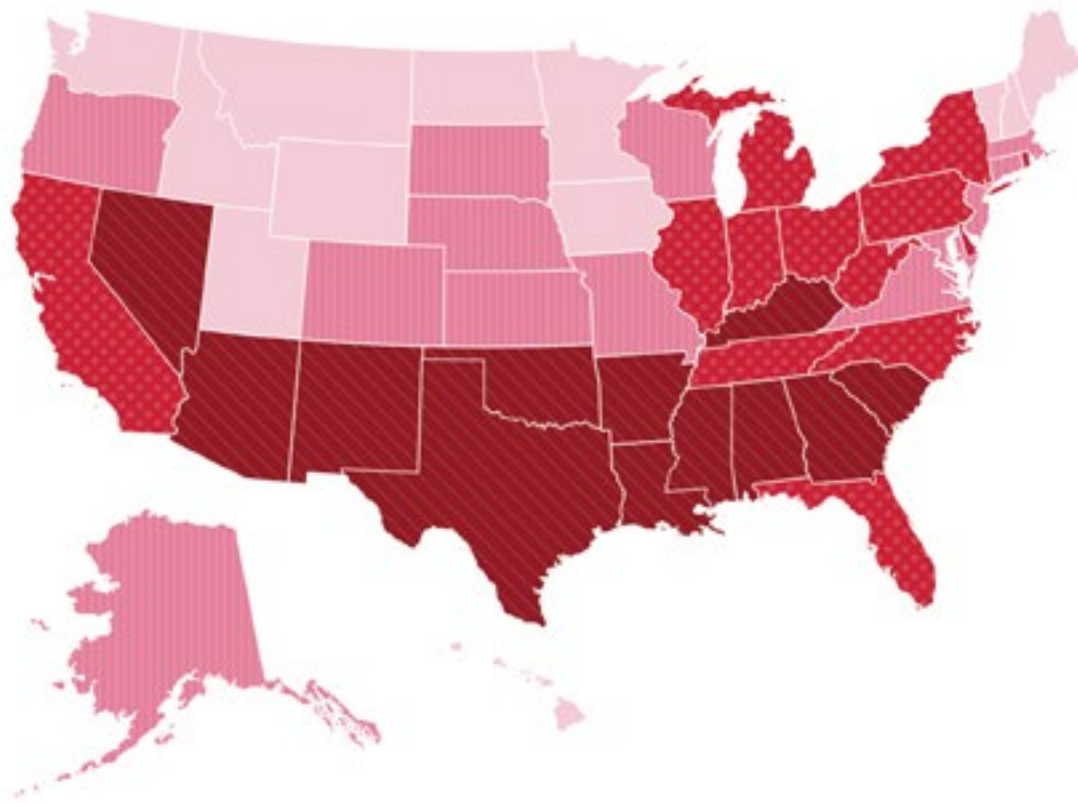
District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Children who live in nurturing families and supportive communities have stronger personal connections and higher academic achievement. Parents struggling with financial hardship have fewer resources available to foster their children's development and are more prone to face severe stress and depression, which can interfere with effective parenting. These findings underscore the importance of two-generation approaches to ending poverty, which address the needs of parents and children at the same time so they can succeed together. Where families live also matters. When communities are safe and have strong institutions, good schools and quality support services, families and their children are more likely to thrive.

A 2023 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. Utah	13. Colorado	26. Illinois	39. Georgia
2. New Hampshire	14. Massachusetts	27. Rhode Island	40. Arizona
3. Maine	15. New Jersey	28. Delaware	41. South Carolina
4. Vermont	16. Oregon	29. Pennsylvania	42. Kentucky
5. Idaho	17. Virginia	30. Michigan	43. Oklahoma
6. North Dakota	18. Wisconsin	31. Indiana	44. Nevada
7. Minnesota	19. Connecticut	32. Florida	45. Alabama
8. Hawaii	20. Nebraska	33. Ohio	46. Arkansas
9. Iowa	21. Maryland	34. West Virginia	47. Texas
10. Washington	22. Alaska	35. North Carolina	48. New Mexico
11. Montana	23. South Dakota	36. New York	49. Louisiana
12. Wyoming	24. Kansas	37. California	50. Mississippi
	25. Missouri	38. Tennessee	

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHILD WELL-BEING RANKINGS

LOCATION	OVERALL RANK	ECONOMIC WELL-BEING RANK	EDUCATION RANK	HEALTH RANK	FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RANK
Alabama	45	42	39	45	45
Alaska	38	46	48	27	22
Arizona	39	33	45	32	40
Arkansas	43	40	37	42	46
California	35	43	36	14	37
Colorado	15	17	15	21	13
Connecticut	9	15	3	12	19
Delaware	34	28	41	31	28
District of Columbia	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.
Florida	31	37	5	33	32
Georgia	37	35	31	43	39
Hawaii	25	44	19	13	8
Idaho	13	11	38	17	5
Illinois	19	23	8	23	26
Indiana	24	16	13	29	31
Iowa	6	3	9	11	9
Kansas	17	7	26	22	24
Kentucky	40	41	29	40	42
Louisiana	49	50	43	49	49
Maine	12	14	34	10	3
Maryland	21	21	25	24	21
Massachusetts	3	20	1	1	14
Michigan	32	32	42	26	30
Minnesota	5	5	18	4	7
Mississippi	48	47	32	50	50
Missouri	28	18	22	35	25
Montana	18	13	21	30	11
Nebraska	8	1	12	15	20
Nevada	47	48	46	38	44
New Hampshire	1	4	4	3	2
New Jersey	7	29	2	5	15
New Mexico	50	49	50	44	48
New York	30	45	16	9	36
North Carolina	33	27	23	34	35
North Dakota	11	6	35	19	6
Ohio	29	26	20	28	33
Oklahoma	46	38	49	37	43
Oregon	26	30	44	7	16
Pennsylvania	22	22	17	20	29
Puerto Rico	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.
Rhode Island	20	24	33	8	27
South Carolina	41	34	40	47	41
South Dakota	23	9	24	36	23
Tennessee	36	31	30	41	38
Texas	44	39	27	48	47
Utah	2	2	6	18	1
Vermont	4	8	11	2	4
Virginia	14	12	10	25	17
Washington	16	25	28	6	10
West Virginia	42	36	47	39	34
Wisconsin	10	10	7	16	18
Wyoming	27	19	14	46	12

N.R.: Not ranked

APPENDIX B

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING INDICATORS

LOCATION	CHILDREN IN POVERTY (2021)		CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS LACK SECURE EMPLOYMENT (2021)		CHILDREN LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH A HIGH HOUSING COST BURDEN (2021)		TEENS NOT IN SCHOOL AND NOT WORKING (2021)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
United States	12,243,000	17	21,143,000	29	21,857,000	30	1,234,000	7
Alabama	245,000	22	343,000	31	287,000	26	27,000	10
Alaska	22,000	12	61,000	34	53,000	30	5,000	14
Arizona	275,000	17	446,000	28	462,000	29	31,000	8
Arkansas	155,000	22	210,000	30	174,000	25	16,000	10
California	1,363,000	16	2,771,000	32	3,514,000	40	149,000	7
Colorado	145,000	12	296,000	24	375,000	30	20,000	7
Connecticut	92,000	13	193,000	27	228,000	31	8,000	4
Delaware	35,000	17	62,000	29	64,000	31	3,000	5
District of Columbia	29,000	24	52,000	41	39,000	31	2,000	7
Florida	753,000	18	1,236,000	29	1,540,000	36	72,000	7
Georgia	502,000	20	736,000	29	741,000	29	51,000	8
Hawaii	41,000	14	96,000	31	117,000	39	6,000	10
Idaho	60,000	13	99,000	21	105,000	22	8,000	7
Illinois	442,000	16	761,000	27	770,000	28	42,000	6
Indiana	249,000	16	428,000	27	337,000	21	24,000	6
Iowa	91,000	13	153,000	21	146,000	20	8,000	4
Kansas	92,000	13	159,000	23	139,000	20	10,000	6
Kentucky	220,000	22	333,000	33	245,000	24	23,000	9
Louisiana	287,000	27	378,000	35	325,000	30	26,000	11
Maine	37,000	15	66,000	26	56,000	23	4,000	6
Maryland	187,000	14	344,000	25	423,000	31	18,000	6
Massachusetts	169,000	13	396,000	29	408,000	30	17,000	5
Michigan	377,000	18	680,000	32	531,000	25	39,000	7
Minnesota	139,000	11	299,000	23	279,000	21	14,000	5
Mississippi	189,000	28	241,000	35	194,000	28	12,000	7
Missouri	219,000	16	356,000	26	302,000	22	24,000	7
Montana	32,000	14	65,000	28	52,000	22	3,000	6
Nebraska	59,000	13	94,000	19	104,000	22	4,000	4
Nevada	129,000	19	233,000	33	243,000	35	15,000	10
New Hampshire	23,000	9	59,000	23	61,000	24	3,000	4
New Jersey	284,000	14	563,000	28	715,000	35	27,000	6
New Mexico	111,000	24	165,000	35	125,000	26	14,000	12
New York	747,000	19	1,384,000	34	1,558,000	38	64,000	6
North Carolina	411,000	18	641,000	28	570,000	25	41,000	7
North Dakota	19,000	10	37,000	20	36,000	20	3,000	7
Ohio	475,000	19	785,000	30	585,000	22	39,000	6
Oklahoma	199,000	21	287,000	30	242,000	25	21,000	9
Oregon	113,000	14	265,000	31	266,000	31	14,000	7
Pennsylvania	446,000	17	765,000	29	666,000	25	41,000	6
Puerto Rico	298,000	55	279,000	51	143,000	26	22,000	13
Rhode Island	30,000	15	66,000	32	68,000	33	2,000	3
South Carolina	221,000	20	324,000	29	284,000	25	23,000	8
South Dakota	31,000	15	47,000	21	44,000	20	3,000	6
Tennessee	272,000	18	463,000	30	399,000	26	26,000	7
Texas	1,441,000	20	2,111,000	28	2,362,000	32	143,000	8
Utah	76,000	8	176,000	19	211,000	22	13,000	6
Vermont	12,000	10	28,000	24	28,000	24	2,000	5
Virginia	243,000	13	454,000	24	506,000	27	25,000	5
Washington	198,000	12	476,000	28	494,000	30	26,000	7
West Virginia	73,000	21	129,000	36	78,000	22	7,000	8
Wisconsin	168,000	13	297,000	23	272,000	21	17,000	6
Wyoming	17,000	13	36,000	27	32,000	24	2,000	7

EDUCATION INDICATORS

LOCATION	YOUNG CHILDREN (AGES 3 AND 4) NOT IN SCHOOL (2017-21)		FOURTH-GRADERS NOT PROFICIENT IN READING (2022)		EIGHTH-GRADERS NOT PROFICIENT IN MATH (2022)		HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NOT GRADUATING ON TIME (2019-20)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
United States	4,380,000	54	N.A.	68	N.A.	74	N.A.	14
Alabama	72,000	57	N.A.	72	N.A.	81	N.A.	9
Alaska	13,000	63	N.A.	76	N.A.	77	N.A.	21
Arizona	112,000	64	N.A.	69	N.A.	76	N.A.	23
Arkansas	43,000	56	N.A.	70	N.A.	81	N.A.	11
California	542,000	54	N.A.	69	N.A.	77	N.A.	16
Colorado	70,000	51	N.A.	62	N.A.	72	N.A.	18
Connecticut	30,000	39	N.A.	65	N.A.	70	N.A.	12
Delaware	12,000	53	N.A.	75	N.A.	82	N.A.	11
District of Columbia	4,000	23	N.A.	74	N.A.	84	N.A.	27
Florida	232,000	50	N.A.	61	N.A.	77	N.A.	10
Georgia	143,000	52	N.A.	68	N.A.	76	N.A.	16
Hawaii	19,000	52	N.A.	65	N.A.	78	N.A.	14
Idaho	32,000	65	N.A.	68	N.A.	68	N.A.	18
Illinois	148,000	48	N.A.	67	N.A.	73	N.A.	12
Indiana	104,000	60	N.A.	67	N.A.	70	N.A.	9
Iowa	46,000	57	N.A.	67	N.A.	72	N.A.	8
Kansas	43,000	55	N.A.	69	N.A.	77	N.A.	12
Kentucky	68,000	60	N.A.	69	N.A.	79	N.A.	9
Louisiana	63,000	51	N.A.	72	N.A.	81	N.A.	17
Maine	15,000	57	N.A.	71	N.A.	76	N.A.	13
Maryland	82,000	54	N.A.	69	N.A.	75	N.A.	13
Massachusetts	64,000	44	N.A.	57	N.A.	65	N.A.	11
Michigan	130,000	55	N.A.	72	N.A.	75	N.A.	18
Minnesota	77,000	54	N.A.	68	N.A.	68	N.A.	16
Mississippi	38,000	50	N.A.	69	N.A.	82	N.A.	12
Missouri	84,000	55	N.A.	70	N.A.	76	N.A.	11
Montana	16,000	59	N.A.	66	N.A.	71	N.A.	14
Nebraska	31,000	57	N.A.	66	N.A.	69	N.A.	13
Nevada	50,000	66	N.A.	73	N.A.	79	N.A.	17
New Hampshire	13,000	49	N.A.	63	N.A.	71	N.A.	12
New Jersey	85,000	39	N.A.	62	N.A.	67	N.A.	9
New Mexico	30,000	59	N.A.	79	N.A.	87	N.A.	23
New York	201,000	42	N.A.	70	N.A.	72	N.A.	17
North Carolina	144,000	58	N.A.	68	N.A.	75	N.A.	12
North Dakota	15,000	69	N.A.	69	N.A.	72	N.A.	11
Ohio	162,000	57	N.A.	65	N.A.	71	N.A.	16
Oklahoma	60,000	58	N.A.	76	N.A.	84	N.A.	19
Oregon	54,000	58	N.A.	72	N.A.	78	N.A.	17
Pennsylvania	161,000	55	N.A.	66	N.A.	73	N.A.	13
Puerto Rico	23,000	42	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	22
Rhode Island	13,000	56	N.A.	66	N.A.	76	N.A.	16
South Carolina	67,000	57	N.A.	68	N.A.	78	N.A.	18
South Dakota	15,000	61	N.A.	68	N.A.	68	N.A.	16
Tennessee	103,000	62	N.A.	70	N.A.	75	N.A.	10
Texas	477,000	58	N.A.	70	N.A.	76	N.A.	10
Utah	58,000	58	N.A.	63	N.A.	65	N.A.	12
Vermont	5,000	42	N.A.	66	N.A.	73	N.A.	17
Virginia	109,000	53	N.A.	68	N.A.	69	N.A.	11
Washington	110,000	57	N.A.	66	N.A.	72	N.A.	17
West Virginia	25,000	69	N.A.	78	N.A.	85	N.A.	8
Wisconsin	82,000	59	N.A.	67	N.A.	67	N.A.	10
Wyoming	8,000	58	N.A.	62	N.A.	69	N.A.	18

N.A.: Not available

HEALTH INDICATORS

LOCATION	LOW BIRTH-WEIGHT BABIES (2021)		CHILDREN WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE (2021)		CHILD AND TEEN DEATHS PER 100,000 (2021)		CHILDREN AND TEENS (AGES 10 TO 17) WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE (2020-21)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Rate	Number	Percent
United States	311,932	8.5	4,165,000	5	23,198	30	N.A.	33
Alabama	6,053	10.4	47,000	4	526	44	N.A.	37
Alaska	647	6.9	15,000	8	70	37	N.A.	31
Arizona	6,132	7.9	146,000	9	643	37	N.A.	31
Arkansas	3,422	9.5	43,000	6	290	39	N.A.	37
California	30,605	7.3	321,000	3	2,120	23	N.A.	35
Colorado	5,939	9.5	61,000	5	431	32	N.A.	24
Connecticut	2,906	8.1	19,000	2	156	20	N.A.	34
Delaware	952	9.1	8,000	4	75	33	N.A.	36
District of Columbia	829	9.6	5,000	4	44	32	N.A.	33
Florida	19,460	9.0	332,000	7	1,411	31	N.A.	33
Georgia	13,140	10.6	176,000	7	985	36	N.A.	34
Hawaii	1,381	8.8	9,000	3	55	17	N.A.	32
Idaho	1,494	6.7	35,000	7	149	30	N.A.	27
Illinois	11,235	8.5	95,000	3	899	30	N.A.	32
Indiana	6,704	8.4	100,000	6	633	37	N.A.	30
Iowa	2,519	6.8	26,000	3	194	25	N.A.	34
Kansas	2,567	7.4	38,000	5	268	36	N.A.	30
Kentucky	4,761	9.1	43,000	4	398	37	N.A.	41
Louisiana	6,507	11.3	45,000	4	592	52	N.A.	39
Maine	875	7.3	11,000	4	70	26	N.A.	30
Maryland	6,080	8.9	62,000	4	355	24	N.A.	32
Massachusetts	5,148	7.5	18,000	1	238	16	N.A.	28
Michigan	9,668	9.2	69,000	3	649	28	N.A.	34
Minnesota	4,665	7.2	44,000	3	370	26	N.A.	26
Mississippi	4,339	12.3	46,000	6	405	55	N.A.	41
Missouri	6,168	8.9	86,000	6	567	39	N.A.	34
Montana	853	7.6	17,000	7	132	53	N.A.	26
Nebraska	1,880	7.6	24,000	5	145	28	N.A.	29
Nevada	3,255	9.7	63,000	9	211	29	N.A.	32
New Hampshire	878	7.0	11,000	4	58	21	N.A.	27
New Jersey	7,844	7.7	76,000	4	372	17	N.A.	29
New Mexico	2,009	9.4	32,000	6	217	43	N.A.	36
New York	17,678	8.4	115,000	3	814	19	N.A.	32
North Carolina	11,365	9.4	135,000	5	849	34	N.A.	34
North Dakota	672	6.6	14,000	7	58	29	N.A.	29
Ohio	11,291	8.7	140,000	5	837	30	N.A.	34
Oklahoma	4,253	8.8	75,000	7	362	35	N.A.	34
Oregon	2,827	6.9	31,000	3	192	21	N.A.	31
Pennsylvania	11,007	8.3	126,000	4	823	29	N.A.	30
Puerto Rico	2,030	10.5	16,000	3	138	23	N.A.	N.A.
Rhode Island	828	7.9	6,000	3	38	16	N.A.	32
South Carolina	5,723	10.0	63,000	5	496	41	N.A.	40
South Dakota	810	7.1	18,000	8	96	41	N.A.	37
Tennessee	7,595	9.3	80,000	5	648	40	N.A.	37
Texas	32,297	8.6	930,000	12	2,371	30	N.A.	40
Utah	3,465	7.4	79,000	8	256	25	N.A.	26
Vermont	377	7.0	2,000	2	33	25	N.A.	29
Virginia	7,979	8.3	88,000	4	555	27	N.A.	34
Washington	5,830	7.0	55,000	3	473	27	N.A.	28
West Virginia	1,678	9.8	13,000	3	130	34	N.A.	41
Wisconsin	4,756	7.7	54,000	4	371	27	N.A.	31
Wyoming	586	9.4	16,000	11	68	48	N.A.	24

N.A.: Not available

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INDICATORS

LOCATION	CHILDREN IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES (2021)		CHILDREN IN FAMILIES WHERE THE HOUSEHOLD HEAD LACKS A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (2021)		CHILDREN LIVING IN HIGH-POVERTY AREAS (2017-21)		TEEN BIRTHS PER 1,000 (2021)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Rate
United States	23,626,000	34	8,269,000	11	6,086,000	8	146,973	14
Alabama	408,000	39	115,000	10	128,000	11	3,641	23
Alaska	55,000	32	9,000	5	14,000	8	378	17
Arizona	553,000	36	203,000	13	168,000	10	3,551	15
Arkansas	245,000	38	68,000	10	79,000	11	2,609	27
California	2,848,000	34	1,552,000	18	556,000	6	12,480	10
Colorado	336,000	28	121,000	10	25,000	2	2,059	11
Connecticut	234,000	34	57,000	8	54,000	7	845	7
Delaware	72,000	36	21,000	10	8,000	4	425	14
District of Columbia	57,000	49	15,000	12	25,000	20	261	14
Florida	1,558,000	38	420,000	10	312,000	7	8,093	13
Georgia	900,000	38	268,000	11	237,000	9	6,141	17
Hawaii	85,000	30	16,000	5	14,000	4	463	12
Idaho	107,000	24	38,000	8	8,000	2	787	12
Illinois	890,000	33	283,000	10	193,000	7	4,507	11
Indiana	493,000	33	156,000	10	117,000	7	3,843	17
Iowa	196,000	28	56,000	8	22,000	3	1,363	13
Kansas	199,000	30	63,000	9	40,000	6	1,614	16
Kentucky	310,000	33	104,000	10	124,000	12	3,191	22
Louisiana	459,000	45	117,000	11	205,000	19	3,571	25
Maine	72,000	30	11,000	4	4,000	2	298	8
Maryland	442,000	34	133,000	10	43,000	3	2,174	11
Massachusetts	415,000	32	119,000	9	74,000	5	1,309	6
Michigan	693,000	34	181,000	8	239,000	11	3,871	12
Minnesota	352,000	28	88,000	7	51,000	4	1,561	8
Mississippi	292,000	45	76,000	11	152,000	22	2,545	26
Missouri	422,000	32	103,000	7	84,000	6	3,312	17
Montana	64,000	29	10,000	4	16,000	7	442	14
Nebraska	130,000	28	46,000	10	18,000	4	944	14
Nevada	260,000	39	116,000	17	55,000	8	1,384	15
New Hampshire	69,000	28	10,000	4	2,000	1	225	5
New Jersey	552,000	28	180,000	9	146,000	7	2,253	8
New Mexico	196,000	44	59,000	12	92,000	19	1,324	19
New York	1,339,000	34	511,000	12	588,000	14	5,373	9
North Carolina	774,000	36	260,000	11	172,000	7	5,474	16
North Dakota	48,000	27	8,000	4	8,000	4	317	13
Ohio	883,000	36	228,000	9	276,000	10	5,790	16
Oklahoma	310,000	35	115,000	12	100,000	10	3,189	24
Oregon	254,000	31	85,000	10	22,000	2	1,159	9
Pennsylvania	866,000	34	255,000	10	234,000	9	4,643	12
Puerto Rico	335,000	64	58,000	11	491,000	82	1,265	13
Rhode Island	73,000	37	24,000	12	12,000	6	286	8
South Carolina	418,000	40	107,000	10	102,000	9	2,953	18
South Dakota	57,000	28	14,000	6	22,000	10	501	17
Tennessee	500,000	35	151,000	10	129,000	8	4,613	22
Texas	2,392,000	34	1,193,000	16	879,000	12	21,041	20
Utah	167,000	18	57,000	6	11,000	1	1,282	10
Vermont	36,000	32	5,000	4	3,000	2	133	6
Virginia	558,000	31	145,000	8	79,000	4	3,198	12
Washington	455,000	28	158,000	9	38,000	2	2,276	10
West Virginia	112,000	35	28,000	8	34,000	9	1,080	21
Wisconsin	391,000	32	102,000	8	71,000	6	1,906	10
Wyoming	32,000	26	11,000	8	3,000	2	295	16

ABOUT THE KIDS COUNT INDEX

The KIDS COUNT index reflects child health and educational outcomes as well as risk and protective factors, such as economic well-being, family structure and community context. The index incorporates a developmental perspective on childhood and includes experiences across life stages, from birth through early adulthood. The indicators are consistently and regularly measured, which allows for legitimate comparisons across states and over time.

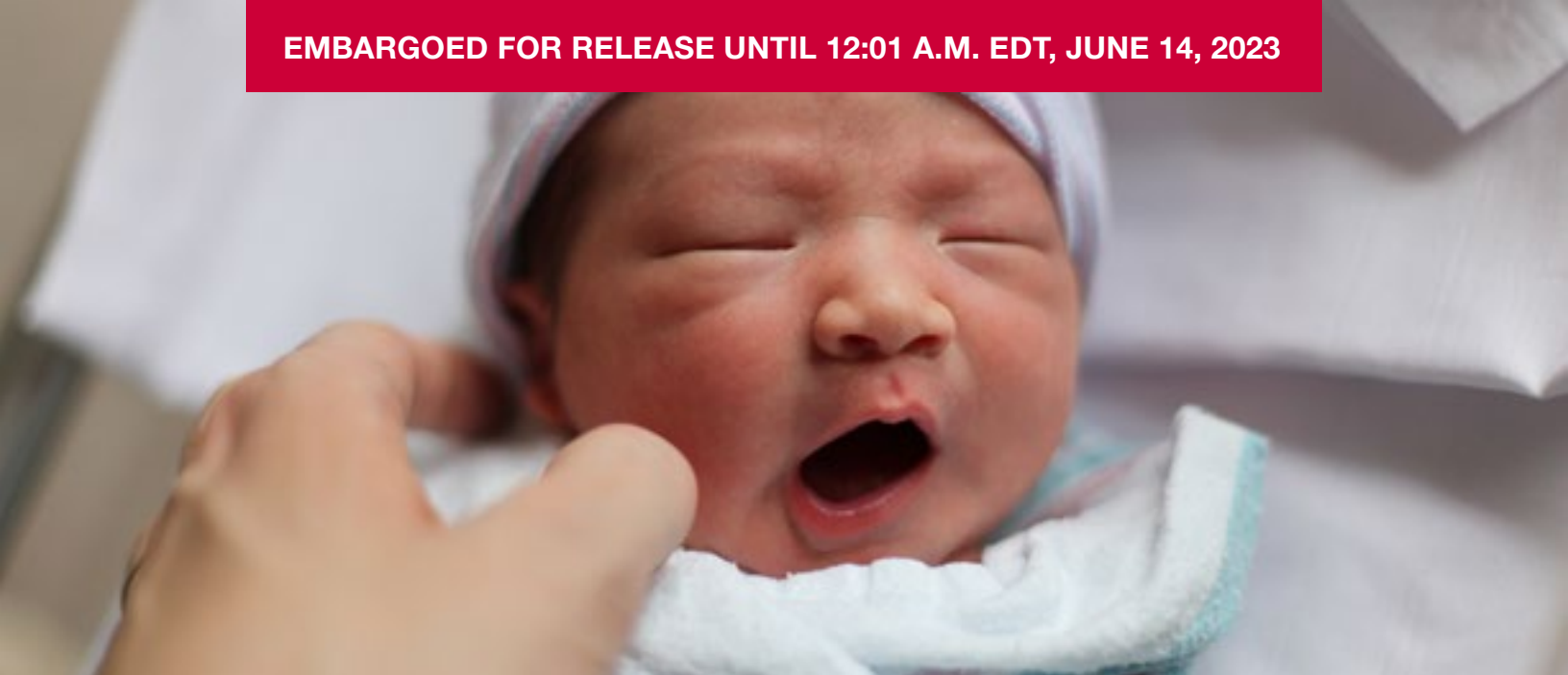
Organizing the index into domains provides a more nuanced assessment of child well-being in each state that can inform policy solutions by helping policymakers and advocates better identify areas of strength and weakness. For example, a state may rank well above average in overall child well-being, while showing the need for improvement in one or more domains. Domain-specific data can strengthen decision-making efforts by providing multiple data points relevant to specific policy areas.

The 16 indicators of child well-being are derived from federal government statistical agencies and reflect the best available state and national data for tracking yearly changes. Many of the indicators are based on samples, and, like all sample data, they contain some random error. Other measures (such as the child and teen death rate) are based on relatively small numbers of events in some states and may exhibit some random fluctuation from year to year.

The Foundation urges readers to focus on relatively large differences across states, as small differences may simply reflect small fluctuations, rather than real changes in the well-being of children. Assessing trends by looking at changes over a longer period is more reliable. State data for past years are available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.aecf.org.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses rates and percentages because they are the best way to compare states and to assess changes over time within a state. However, the focus on rates and percentages may mask the magnitude of some of the problems examined in this report. Therefore, data on the actual number of children or events are provided on pages 34–37 and in the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

The Foundation includes data for the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico in the appendices, but not in the state rankings because they are significantly different from states, and comparisons are not instructive. It is more useful to look at changes for these geographies over time or to compare the District of Columbia with other large cities. Data for many child well-being indicators for the 50 largest cities (including the District of Columbia) are available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center, which also contains statistics for children and families in the U.S. Virgin Islands.



DEFINITIONS AND DATA SOURCES

DEFINITIONS

Domain rank for each state was determined in the following manner. First, the Foundation converted the state numerical values for the most recent year for each of the four key indicators within every domain into standard scores. It summed those standard scores in each domain to get a total standard score for each state. Finally, Casey ranked the states based on their total standard score by domain in sequential order from highest/best (1) to lowest/worst (50). Standard scores were derived by subtracting the mean score from the observed score and dividing the amount by the standard deviation for that distribution of scores. All measures were given the same weight in calculating the domain standard score.

Overall rank for each state was calculated in the following manner. First, Casey converted the state numerical values for the most recent year for all 16 key indicators into standard scores. It summed those standard scores within their domains to create a domain standard score for each state. The Foundation then summed

the four domain standard scores to get a total standard score for every state. Finally, it ranked the states based on their total standard score in sequential order from highest/best (1) to lowest/worst (50). Standard scores were derived by subtracting the mean score from the observed score and dividing the amount by the standard deviation for that distribution of scores. All measures were given the same weight in calculating the total standard score.

Percentage change over time analysis was computed by comparing the most recent year's data for the 16 key indicators with the data for the base year. To calculate percentage change, the Foundation subtracted the rate for the most recent year from the rate for the base year and then divided that quantity by the rate for the base year. The results are multiplied by 100 for readability. The percentage change was calculated on rounded data, and the percentage-change figure has been rounded to the nearest whole number.



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING INDICATORS

Children in poverty is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below 100% of the U.S. poverty threshold, as defined each year by the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2021, a family of two adults and two children lived in poverty if the family's annual income fell below \$27,479. Poverty status is not determined for people living in group quarters (such as military barracks, prisons and other institutional settings) or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as children in foster care). The data are based on income received in the 12 months prior to the survey. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Children whose parents lack secure employment is the share of all children under age 18 who live in families where no parent has regular, full-time, year-round employment. For children in single-parent families, this means the resident parent did not work at least 35 hours per week for at least 50 weeks in the 12 months prior to the survey. For children living in married-couple families, this means neither parent worked at least 35 hours per week for at least 50 weeks in the 12 months before the survey. Children who live with neither parent are also listed as not having secure parental employment because they are likely to be economically vulnerable. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Children living in households with a high housing cost burden is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in households where more than 30% of monthly household pretax income is spent on housing-related expenses, including rent, mortgage payments, taxes and insurance. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Teens not in school and not working is the percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school (full or part time) and not employed (full or part time). *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*



EDUCATION INDICATORS

Young children not in school is the percentage of children ages 3 and 4 who were not enrolled in school (e.g., nursery school, preschool or kindergarten) during the previous three months.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Fourth-graders not proficient in reading is the percentage of fourth-grade public school students who did not reach the proficient level in reading as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For this indicator, public schools include charter schools and exclude Bureau of Indian Education and Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Eighth-graders not proficient in math is the percentage of eighth-grade public school students who did not reach the proficient level in math as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For this indicator, public schools include charter schools and exclude Bureau of Indian Education and Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

High school students not graduating on time is the percentage of an entering freshman class not graduating in four years. The measure is derived from the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). The four-year ACGR is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. Students who enter ninth grade for the first time form a cohort that is adjusted by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort and subtracting any students who transfer out. Due to data collection issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, this indicator may not be comparable across time. *SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.*



HEALTH INDICATORS

Low birth-weight babies is the percentage of live births weighing less than 5.5 pounds (2,500 grams). The data reflect the mother's place of residence, not the place where the birth occurred. *SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics.*

Children without health insurance is the percentage of children under age 19 not covered by any health insurance. The data are based on health insurance coverage at the time of the survey; interviews are conducted throughout the calendar year. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Child and teen deaths per 100,000 is the number of deaths, from all causes, of children between ages 1 and 19 per 100,000 children in this age range. The data are reported by the place of residence, not the place where the death occurred. *SOURCES: **Death statistics:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics. **Population statistics:** U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates.*

Children and teens who are overweight or obese is the percentage of children and teens ages 10 to 17 with a Body Mass Index (BMI)-for-age at or above the 85th percentile. These data are based on a two-year average of survey responses. *SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Survey of Children's Health.*



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INDICATORS

Children in single-parent families is the percentage of children under age 18 who live with their own unmarried parents. Children not living with a parent are excluded. In this definition, single-parent families include cohabiting couples. Children who live with married stepparents are not considered to be in a single-parent family. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in households where the head of the household does not have a high school diploma or equivalent. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Children living in high-poverty areas is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in census tracts where the poverty rates of the total population are 30% or more. In 2021, a family of two adults and two children lived in poverty if the family's annual income fell below \$27,479. The data are based on income received in the 12 months prior to the survey. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Teen births per 1,000 is the number of births to teenagers ages 15 to 19 per 1,000 females in this age group. Data reflect the mother's place of residence, not the place where the birth occurred. *SOURCES: Birth statistics: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics. Population statistics: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates.*

STATE KIDS COUNT ORGANIZATIONS

ALABAMA

VOICES for Alabama’s Children
alavoices.org
 334.213.2410

ALASKA

Alaska Children’s Trust
www.alaskachildrenstrust.org
 907.248.7676

ARIZONA

Children’s Action Alliance
azchildren.org
 602.266.0707

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Advocates for
 Children & Families
www.aradvocates.org
 501.371.9678

CALIFORNIA

Children Now
www.childrennow.org
 510.763.2444

COLORADO

Colorado Children’s Campaign
www.coloradokids.org
 303.839.1580

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Voices for Children
ctvoices.org
 203.498.4240

DELAWARE

University of Delaware
dekidscount.org
 302.831.3462

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DC Action
www.wearedcaction.org
 202.234.9404

FLORIDA

Florida Policy Institute
www.floridapolicy.org
 407.440.1421 ext. 709

GEORGIA

Georgia Family
 Connection Partnership
gafcp.org
 678.326.2538

HAWAII

Hawaii Children’s Action Network
www.hawaii-can.org
 808.531.5502

IDAHO

Idaho Voices for Children
 Jannus, Inc.
www.idahovoices.org
 208.947.4259

ILLINOIS

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
ywcachicago.org
 312.372.6600

INDIANA

Indiana Youth Institute
www.iyi.org
 317.396.2700

IOWA

Common Good Iowa
www.commongoodiowa.org
 515.280.9027

KANSAS

Kansas Action for Children
www.kac.org
 785.232.0550

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Youth Advocates
kyyouth.org
 502.895.8167

LOUISIANA

Agenda for Children
agendaforchildren.org
 504.586.8509

MAINE

Maine Children’s Alliance
www.mekids.org
 207.623.1868

MARYLAND

Maryland Center on
 Economic Policy
www.mdeconomy.org
 410.412.9105

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Budget
 and Policy Center
massbudget.org
 617.426.1228

MICHIGAN

Michigan League for
 Public Policy
mlpp.org
 517.487.5436

MINNESOTA

Children’s Defense Fund-
 Minnesota
cdf-mn.org
 651.227.6121

MISSISSIPPI

Children’s Foundation
 of Mississippi
childrensfoundationms.org
 601.982.9050

MISSOURI

Family and Community Trust
www.mokidscount.org
 573.636.6300

MONTANA

Montana Budget & Policy Center
montanakidscount.org
 406.422.5848

NEBRASKA

Voices for Children in Nebraska
voicesforchildren.com
 402.597.3100

NEVADA

Children's Advocacy Alliance
www.caanv.org
 702.228.1869

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Futures KIDS COUNT
www.new-futures.org
 603.225.9540

NEW JERSEY

Advocates for Children of
 New Jersey
acnj.org
 973.643.3876

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Voices for Children
www.nmvoices.org
 505.244.9505

NEW YORK

New York State Council on
 Children and Families
www.ccf.ny.gov
 518.473.3652

NORTH CAROLINA

NC Child
ncchild.org
 919.834.6623

NORTH DAKOTA

Montana Budget & Policy Center
ndkidscount.org
 406.422.5848

OHIO

Children's Defense Fund-Ohio
cdfohio.org
 614.221.2244

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Policy Institute
okpolicy.org
 918.794.3944

OREGON

Our Children Oregon
ourchildrenoregon.org
 503.236.9754

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania Partnerships
 for Children
www.papartnerships.org
 717.236.5680

PUERTO RICO

Youth Development Institute
 (Instituto del Desarrollo de
 la Juventud)
www.juventudpr.org
 787.728.3939

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
www.rikidscount.org
 401.351.9400

SOUTH CAROLINA

Children's Trust of South
 Carolina
scchildren.org
 803.733.5430

SOUTH DAKOTA

Montana Budget & Policy Center
sdkidscount.org
 406.422.5848

TENNESSEE

Tennessee Commission on
 Children and Youth
www.tn.gov/tccy
 615.741.2633

TEXAS

Every Texan
everytexan.org/kids-count
 512.320.0222

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

St. Croix Foundation for
 Community Development
stxfoundation.org
 340.773.9898

UTAH

Voices for Utah Children
www.utahchildren.org
 801.364.1182

VERMONT

Voices for Vermont's Children
www.voicesforvtkids.org
 802.229.6377

VIRGINIA

Voices for Virginia's Children
vakids.org
 804.649.0184

WASHINGTON

KIDS COUNT in Washington
www.childrensalliance.org
 206.324.0340

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia KIDS COUNT
wvkidscount.org
 304.345.2101

WISCONSIN

Kids Forward
kidsforward.org
 608.285.2314

WYOMING

Wyoming Community Foundation
www.wycf.org/wycountkids
 307.721.8300

ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children and youth by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. Based in Baltimore, the Foundation is celebrating 75 years of investing in the well-being and success of children and youth who face major hurdles on the road to adulthood.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT (LA INFANCIA CUENTA™) is a national and state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and advocates with benchmarks of child and young adult well-being, the Foundation seeks to enrich local, state and national discussions concerning ways to enable all kids and youth to succeed.

Nationally, the Foundation produces publications on key areas of well-being, including the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, *Race for Results* and periodic reports on critical child and family policy and practice issues. In addition, through its Thrive by 25® briefs, it reports on the needs of young people ages 14 through 24. All the Foundation's lessons are available at www.aecf.org/publications.

The Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Center — at datacenter.aecf.org — provides the best available data on child well-being in the United States. Additionally, the Foundation funds the KIDS COUNT Network — which counts members serving every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands — to provide a more detailed, local picture of how children are faring.

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THE ANNIE E. CASEY
FOUNDATION

Celebrating 75 Years of Investing in America's Children, Youth and Families