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**25<sup>th</sup> Edition of *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book* Ranks California 40<sup>th</sup> in Overall Child Well-Being**

Oakland, Calif.—California ranks 40<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 States in children’s overall well-being, according to The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book*, released today in partnership with Children Now, a children’s health and education research, policy and advocacy organization based in Oakland.

The *Data Book* ranks each state and the District of Columbia on 16 key indicators across four fundamental domains: Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, and Family and Community. In measures of children’s well-being, California ranks highest in Health (26<sup>th</sup>) and lowest in Economic Well-Being (48<sup>th</sup>).

California’s Rankings in Children’s Well-Being:				
Overall Rank	Economic Well-Being	Education	Health	Family and Community
40	48	39	26	43

“Knowing our vibrant and diverse communities, our incredible intellectual and financial resources, and our reputation for leadership and innovation, there is no excuse for California to be ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in children’s well-being,” said Ted Lempert, President of Children Now. “We simply haven’t invested enough in our children in spite of much greater capacity to do so. For example, California ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the nation on per capita state and local revenue, and yet we rank much lower, just 36<sup>th</sup> in per pupil education spending.” California ranks in the bottom in the domain of Education (39<sup>th</sup>) and is near last in measures of children’s Economic Well-Being (48<sup>th</sup>).

“The good news is the State is already taking steps to improve,” said Lempert, citing the enactment last year of the Local Control Funding Formula, historic school equity reform, and this year’s budget investment and future commitment for early education. “These actions were critical given that as of 2012, more than half a million children ages 3 and 4 (53 percent) were not attending preschool and 18 percent of high school students did not graduate on time.”

“Improving education is a critical goal in itself, but it’s also the most effective long-term strategy for combatting poverty,” added Lempert.

The 2014 *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book* also highlights a bright spot for California. Providing a retrospective since its first publication, the *Data Book* tracks the ways in which California’s policies led to a 63 percent decline in California’s teen birth rate, the largest decline of all of the states. In 1990, California’s teen birth rate was 71 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19; as of 2012 the birth rate had dropped to 26 per 1,000.

With a health ranking of 26 out of 50, California has seen some gains in children’s health. For example, in 1990, roughly 1 in 6 California children (17 percent) were uninsured. According to the *Data Book*, the most recent estimates indicate that approximately 1 in 12 children (8 percent) live without health insurance.

“California continues to take the lead in expanding health care access and this is reflected in the *Data Book*,” said Lempert. “When California prioritizes the well-being of children, we can make a difference.”

Summarizing the report overall, Lempert concluded, “as the ninth largest economy in the world, our children deserve better. If California consistently places its children at the top of our policy priorities, in 25 years, the *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book* will rank California first in children’s overall well-being.”

The complete report is available online at [www.childrennow.org/](http://www.childrennow.org/)

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*Children Now is the leading, nonpartisan, umbrella research, policy development, and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting children's health and education in California and creating national media policies that support child development. The organization also leads The Children's Movement of California. Learn more about us at [www.childrennow.org](http://www.childrennow.org).*

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation’s children 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. For more information, visit [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).*

*The KIDS COUNT Data Book features the latest data on child well-being for states, the District of Columbia and the nation, as does the Casey Foundation’s [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#), which is home to hundreds of national, state and local measures of child well-being. KIDS COUNT<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.*