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**2014 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK MEASURES CHILD WELL-BEING AND LOOKS BACK AT  
25 YEARS OF CHANGES**

***Idaho Near-Bottom in Preschool Participation, Slides in Education Rankings, Improves in Health***

BOISE, ID — The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 2014 *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book* reveals both positive and negative trends for our nation’s kids, with continued erosion of economic well-being. The *Data Book* assesses states on 16 indicators of child well-being, organized into four categories: Family and Community, Education, Economic Well-Being, and Health. Idaho ranks 21st in overall, a one-spot drop from last year. A deeper look into the data, however, reveals several notable trends, some positive and some concerning.

Idaho continues to slide in national educational rankings, falling to 33<sup>rd</sup> overall from 29<sup>th</sup> last year. Idaho has dropped seven spots to 33<sup>rd</sup> in fourth grade reading scores (with 67 percent reading below proficient reading level) and ranks 47<sup>th</sup> nationally for preschool participation (with 65 percent of 3-to-4 year-olds not attending). This near last place ranking in preschool participation is especially alarming for Idaho’s future, according to Idaho KIDS COUNT Director Lauren Necochea.

“If we can get kids off to a strong start, they will enter school better prepared to learn,” Necochea stated. “We know that the benefits of early learning translate to more success in school and later in life. When our youngest students fall behind early, it becomes more and more difficult for them to catch up.”

Idaho ranks highest in the Family and Community domain, coming in at 11<sup>th</sup> position overall. Despite an increase in the percentage of kids living in single-parent families (from 23 percent in 2005 to 27 percent in 2012), Idaho ranks second for this indicator. Nationwide, 35 percent of kids live in one-parent homes. Idaho has also experienced a positive trend with teen births, which have declined significantly since 2005.

Idaho’s children and families continue to struggle in economic areas, with worsening trends in every indicator measured. The rate of children in poverty rose from 18 percent in 2005 to 21 percent in 2012. Approximately 87,000 Idaho kids now live in poverty. Additionally, in 2012, 120,000 Idaho kids, or 28%, lived in families where neither parent had secure, full-time employment.

Idaho made its greatest strides in the health domain, where the state leaped eight spots to 20<sup>th</sup> nationally. Idaho made large gains in the percentage of children covered by health insurance, although the state still ranks 34<sup>th</sup> on this indicator. Idaho's rate of teen drug and alcohol use continues to be among the nation's lowest at 6 percent.

The report includes the latest data on child well-being for every state, the District of Columbia and the nation. This information will be available July 22 at 12:01 a.m. EDT in the [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#), which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of other measures of child well-being. The Data Center allows users to create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and to view real-time information on mobile devices. See [Idaho KIDS COUNT](#) for additional data and policy reports specific to Idaho.

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*Idaho KIDS COUNT is a nonprofit organization bringing data and research to conversations that affect Idaho's children. Idaho KIDS COUNT is a member of the national KIDS COUNT Network, and receives funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Launched in 1994, Idaho KIDS COUNT is a program of Mountain States Group, Inc., a 501(c)3 community resource organization.*