



**UNDER EMBARGO until Tuesday, July 21, 2015, 12:01 a.m. EDT**

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## **NH Rises to #2 in National Child Well-Being Ranking**

*Modest improvements in economic security helped lift the state, but teen substance misuse kept NH from reaching #1 spot according to New KIDS COUNT Data Book*

CONCORD | New Hampshire rose from #4 to #2 in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual ranking of child well-being according to the newly released 2015 *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book*. Although NH's economic security improved, the state missed the top spot (held by Minnesota) in part due to a decrease in its overall ranking on child health. This marks the first time in over a decade that a New England state has not held the top ranking.

The report found that 1.7 million more children live in low-income working families than during the Great Recession. In 2013, one in four children, 18.7 million, lived in a low-income working family in the United States. In addition, the national trends highlight a stagnant economic recovery that sidestepped children of color.

"Although we are several years past the end of the recession, millions of families still have not benefited from the economic recovery," said Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of the Casey Foundation. "While we've seen an increase in employment in recent years, many of these jobs are low-wage and cannot support even basic family expenses. Far too many families are still struggling to provide for the day-to-day needs of their children, notably for the 16 million kids who are living in poverty. We can and must do better: we can make policy choices to lift more families into economic stability."

In many ways, New Hampshire fared better than national trends. The state saw improvements in economic indicators, retained its number one ranking in family and community indicators, and remained consistent in education.

Despite these achievements, New Hampshire continues to fall behind in measures of overall child health, including teen substance misuse.

### **Key New Hampshire Findings**

- **Child poverty decreased from 16 percent (42,000) to 10 percent (27,000).** Despite this recent decrease, there has been a slow, steady upward climb to 10 percent child poverty since 2000 when the child poverty rate was 6 percent.

- **The number of children living in high-poverty areas has doubled.** In 2013, 2 percent or 6,000 children lived in areas with a 30 percent or higher rate of poverty. This rate is more than double the previous year, when 1 percent or 3,000 children lived in high-poverty areas. NH KIDS COUNT reported in our 2015 DATA BOOK that Coös County had the highest rate of child poverty in the state at 21.7 percent, while Hillsborough and Merrimack counties had the highest number of children living in poverty.
- **Fewer children live in households with a high housing cost burden.** 11,000 fewer children lived in households with a high housing cost burden in 2013, further reducing the likelihood that families slipped in poverty.
- **NH tied for highest number of teens who abuse alcohol and drugs in the nation.** While NH's rate of teens who misuse alcohol and drugs remained unchanged from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013 (7 percent or 7,000 teens), other states continued to improve. NH is now ranked 44<sup>th</sup> and tied for the lowest ranking with Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico, Vermont and Wyoming.

“While we are pleased to see improvements in economic stability measurements such as child poverty and secure employment for parents, we have not matched these gains with critical investments in the health and well-being of our children,” said Ellen Fineberg, executive director of New Hampshire Kids Count. “The Granite State should not be last in the nation for *any indicator* of child well-being. When we make smart policy decisions that reflect both data and the needs of our children and families, our state can make a difference.”

The 2015 *Data Book* will be available July 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at <http://databook.kidscount.org> and [nhkidscount.org](http://nhkidscount.org).

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*New Hampshire Kids Count, an independent nonprofit, is the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Hampshire partner. NH Kids Count is dedicated to improving the lives of all children by advocating for public initiatives that make a real difference. Together with you, we raise questions, seek answers, foster conversations, and advocate for changes to make New Hampshire the best place to be a kid. For more information, please visit <http://nhkidscount.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). KIDS COUNT is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.*