

# CHILDREN NOW

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## **California Rises to 36<sup>th</sup> in State Rankings of Child Well-Being in 2016 Data Book**

*Recent state policy and budget changes boost state's rankings; rises to 11<sup>th</sup> in health domain*

OAKLAND, CALIF—California's ranking for children's well-being rose from 38<sup>th</sup> to 36<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states in the last year according to the 2016 edition of the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, in partnership with Children Now. The report measures children's well-being through 16 key indicators that span across four domains including: economic well-being, education, health and family and community. Among those domains, California ranks highest in health (11<sup>th</sup>) with the percentage of uninsured children dropping from 11 percent in 2008 to 5 percent in 2014. The state ranks lowest in economic well-being (47<sup>th</sup>) with more than two million children (23%) living at or below the federal poverty level.

### **California's Ranking in Children's Well-Being**

**Overall Rank: 36**

**Economic Well-Being: 47**

**Education: 35**

**Health: 11**

**Family and Community: 41**

While there is much more work ahead to improve California children's well-being, the report illustrates the state's steady progress in developing and executing effective policies and investments in health, education and safety net programs, which have enabled the state to climb from a low of 41<sup>st</sup> place in 2012 and 2013.

Some of the most important state policies include:

- **Local Control Funding Formula:** California's school finance reform serves as a national model in providing more equitable school funding—prioritizing children from low-income families, foster youth and dual language learners—with local flexibility and greater community engagement.
- **Medi-Cal Expansion:** California was an early adopter of a federal health care reform provision that extends Medi-Cal coverage to youth who age out of foster care until the age of 26. The state also recently extended Medi-Cal coverage to undocumented children.

- **Critical Investments in Early Care and Education:** State leaders continue to push for increased investments in the state’s early care and education system, which provides infants, toddlers and preschoolers with access to quality child care and preschool programs.

“California leaders have taken positive steps to improve children’s well-being and we’ve seen the results – improvements in the lives of millions of kids,” said Children Now President Ted Lempert. “Yet, with California’s vibrant and diverse communities, incredible intellectual and financial resources and our reputation for leadership and innovation, we can do better than 36th in children’s well-being. We need our state and local policymakers to make kids their top policy priority.”

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The 2016 *Data Book* will be available June 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child wellbeing. 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.

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**About Children Now:** *Children Now is a nonpartisan umbrella research, policy development, and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting children's health, education and well-being in California. Children Now also leads The Children’s Movement of California, a grassroots network of more than 1,500 business, education, parent, civil rights, faith, and community-based organizations, as well as thousands of individuals, working together to make children a top priority in public policy. Learn more at [www.childrennow.org](http://www.childrennow.org)*

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