

**EMBARGOED:**

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Idaho Ranks 22nd for Overall Child Well-Being in New Report

Idaho's ranking slipping in education; stronger in the family and community domain

BOISE, IDAHO — Idaho's families are working hard to create better lives for their kids, even in today's difficult economy. A new national *KIDS COUNT*[®] *Data Book* report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation highlights areas of concern and a few bright spots for Idaho's children. Overall, Idaho ranks 22nd in overall child well-being when compared to the rest of the nation.

Idaho's rank in education declined three spots from the previous year, moving the state down to 37th place. "It is appropriate and wise of the Idaho Legislature to be focused on improving education. I'm hopeful that our state's new commitments to literacy interventions and other education initiatives will result in big gains in the coming years," stated Idaho Voices for Children Director Lauren Necochea.

Necochea explained that there is more Idaho can do: "While many other states are making prudent investments in early learning, in Idaho we're missing an opportunity to ensure our kids have a strong foundation and to save public dollars down the road." In Idaho, the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds in a formal early education program is only 31 percent.

The 2016 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* also shows that close to one in five Idaho children are living under the poverty line, which makes their parents ineligible for assistance on our health insurance exchange. "When parents lack insurance, children are also less likely to have coverage. This puts further stress on family economics, which can be a source of toxic stress for children," said policy director of the Idaho Asset-Building Network Christine Tiddens. There are 78,000 Idahoans in the coverage gap and most have children in the home.

Idaho gets high scores for the percentage of kids in two-parent families and the percentage that have at least one parent in secure employment.

The 2016 *Data Book*, which focuses on key trends in child well-being in the post-recession years, measures child well-being in four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community.

The 2016 Data Book will be available June 21 at 12:01 a.m. at 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 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.

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Idaho Voices for Children, a nonprofit program of Jannus, Inc., works to develop and promote a state-level policy agenda that targets child health, education, safety, and family economic stability. Idaho Voices for Children works to ensure all Idaho children arriving at adulthood are ready to succeed as individuals – in families and in the workforce.

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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 and the [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#), which is home to comprehensive national, state and local statistics on child well-being. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.