



UNDER EMBARGO until Tuesday, June 13, 2017, 12:01 a.m. EDT

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Florida Ranks 40th in Latest National Report for Overall Child Well-Being

State's children continue to face serious obstacles despite impressive improvements in health insurance coverage

Tampa, Fla., June 13, 2017 — Florida has made significant strides to improve health insurance coverage for children and families, reducing the amount of uninsured kids by 46 percent from 2010 to 2015, according to the *2017 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. However, during the same period, the state has seen no improvement in the number of children living in poverty and, more worrisome, it has experienced a 17 percent increase in the number of children living in areas of concentrated poverty.

According to the *Data Book*, 40 percent of Florida children live in households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Other troubling economic well-being indicators reveal the deep challenges faced by children and families: more than 900,000 children lived in poverty in 2015, over half a million children lived in high-poverty areas, and 31 percent of Florida's children lived in families where no parent had full-time year-round work.

"We need our children to grow up educated and prepared to join the workforce, pay taxes and support our schools and infrastructure, while being able to live in strong, interconnected and vibrant communities," said Dr. Norín Dollard, Director of Florida KIDS COUNT, housed within the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences at the University of South Florida. "Today, that's not a reality. To accomplish that, we need to ensure that all of Florida's kids have the opportunities and support they need to succeed."

The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* examines recent trends and uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains — health, education, economic well-being and family and community — that represent what children need most to thrive. This year's report compares data roughly from 2010 to 2015. According to the *Data Book*, Florida ranks:

- **31st in education.** Only 50 percent of the Florida's children aged 3 and 4 attended school, and 61 percent of fourth graders scored below proficient level in reading.
- **35th in the family and community.** Nearly half a million (496,000) children lived in families where the head of household lacked a high school diploma. However, the state showed progress in declines in teen birth rates, dropping 34 percent from 28 per 1,000 teen births in 2010 to 21 per 1,000, or 11,957 teen births, in 2015.
- **44th in health.** Reaching the state's lowest level, 284,000 (7 percent) of Florida's children lacked health insurance in 2015.

- **45th in economic well-being.** The number of teens aged 16 to 19 not attending school and not working fell steadily to 73,000 — its lowest level since 2010.

Florida KIDS COUNT, like the Annie E. Casey Foundation, believes the data paints a clear picture that states benefit from policies that work for our children and those that work should not be tossed aside. “As policymakers search for ideas to expand the economy and bring economic opportunity to families, I urge them not to abandon targeted public investments that are helping more people lift themselves out of poverty and gain access to health care,” said Annie E. Casey Foundation President and CEO Patrick McCarthy said.

Release Information

The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available June 13 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org/databook, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the *Data Book* can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

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About Florida KIDS COUNT

The objective of Florida KIDS COUNT is to inform Floridians and their policy makers about the quality of life for Florida's children, and to build leadership and accountability for action on behalf of our children. Using selected key well-being indicators and general demographic profiles, Florida KIDS COUNT provides a consistent and reliable source of information that is adaptable to a variety of uses such as policy analysis, grant and proposal writing, needs assessments and public education. For more information, visit <http://floridakidscount.org/>.

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

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. KIDS COUNT is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.