



BUILDING BETTER LIVES

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Illinois Ranks 19th in Latest National Rankings for Child Well-Being

2017 KIDS COUNT® Data Book shows that sound investments in kids matter; lawmakers urged to not walk back progress

CHICAGO, June 13, 2017 — Illinois' investment in the health of its children is paying off, with just 3 percent of the state's children lacking health insurance, placing the state at 10th in the nation for child health, according to the *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

"The data in this year's *KIDS COUNT Data Book* show that when Illinois makes smart investments in children's well-being, we make progress," said **Tasha Green Cruzat**, President of Voices for Illinois Children. "Yet we have been without a full state budget for two years, and failure to adopt a budget for a third year would put us in danger of undermining the progress we have seen.

The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* 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. The data show that Illinois ranks:

- **10th in health.** Illinois has been a national leader in providing children with access to health insurance. From 2010 to 2015, Illinois cut the uninsured rates for African-American and Latino children *in half*, from 6 percent to 3 percent, for both groups.
- **13th in education.** Early childhood education has been a bright spot for Illinois. Less than half of 3- and 4-year olds do not attend school, ranking the state fifth in this indicator. However, the state still has significant work to do to close the achievement and attainment gaps that exist between low-income and minority students from their white and more affluent peers.
- **25th in economic well-being.** Illinois families continue to struggle with economic security. Although more kids' parents are now working full-time, year-round jobs than in 2010, the percentage of children living in poverty has not changed when comparing the height of the Great Recession in 2010 to 2015 data.
- **28th in the family and community domain.** Illinois has made great strides in reducing the teen birth rate. There were more than 6,000 fewer teen births in 2015 than in 2010. But there are still far too many children living in high-poverty areas and in single-parent families.

"This new information shines a clear light on where Illinois has made progress and where challenges remain," said **Anna Rowan**, *KIDS COUNT* Manager at Voices for Illinois Children. "Our state's expansion of access to early childhood education has provided greater opportunities for children and contributed to our ranking of 19th in the nation for overall child well-being."

But Rowan notes that Illinois still has work to do to help families gain economic security. Nineteen percent of the state's children live in poverty, including about 250,000 children living in families with incomes at or below \$12,018 for a family of four.

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 Voices for Illinois Children

Voices for Illinois Children champions the full development of every child in Illinois to assure the future well-being of everyone in the state. We work with families, communities, and policymakers across multiple issue areas to help children grow up healthy, happy, safe, loved, and well-educated. For more information, visit www.voices4kids.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.