



*Promoting public policy that enhances the lives of children and youth in Vermont*

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

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### **Vermont Ranks Third in Latest National Rankings for Child Well-Being**

**MONTPELIER, Vt., June 13, 2017** — Vermont ranks third in the nation for child well-being, according to the *2017 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Vermont continues to lead the nation on key indicators of child well-being. According to the *Data Book*, just 1 percent of Vermont children live in high-poverty areas and, compared to the 2010 data, the percentage of children without health insurance has decreased by 50 percent.

“This is a time when we have to refuse to compromise what we have worked toward and built,” said **Sarah Teel**, research director at Voices for Vermont’s Children. “Vermont’s commitment to children has always been strong — a great public education system, very good access to health care, and a reliable economic safety net. This is something we can work to protect.”

The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* focuses on key trends for children in the post-recession years 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. Vermont ranks among the states:

- **First in family and community.** The teen birth rate decreased by 33 percent between 2010 and 2015, but 28 percent of children are in single-parent families.
- **Fourth in health.** Vermont has the second lowest child and teen death rate in the country, but 6 percent of teens ages 12 to 17 abused drugs or alcohol in the past year.
- **Fifth in education.** 42 percent of eighth-graders score proficient or above in math, and 12 percent of high school students in the state do not graduate on time.
- **Ninth in economic well-being.** At 4 percent, the state has the lowest percentage of teens ages 16 to 19 not attending school and not working. However, more than a quarter of kids (26 percent) live in families in which no parent has full-time, year-round employment.

Vermont, along with New Hampshire and Massachusetts, is one of three New England states to

rank in the top three for overall child well-being, followed by Minnesota and Iowa.

Despite progress, there remains room for improvement in the economic well-being of children in Vermont. Fifteen thousand kids live below the poverty line, and almost a third of children are in households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Voices for Vermont's Children recently released a state data book, [Seeing the Whole Child](#), with data and research that places each of the national *Data Book* indicators in a Vermont-specific context. *Seeing the Whole Child* also provides rankings for each indicator, suggests numerical goals to help bring Vermont to the number one spot, and makes policy recommendations for achieving this.

Providing an adequate safety net, establishing family-supporting workplace policies and recognizing the power of community-wide investments would help to address disparities and reduce the impact of poverty in our communities, according to **Carlen Finn**, executive director at Voices for Vermont's Children.

"We all have a stake in making sure our children are safe, healthy and supported," Finn said.

#### **Release Information**

The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available June 13 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://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](http://datacenter.kidscount.org).

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#### **About Voices for Vermont's Children**

Voices for Vermont's Children is a statewide, multi-issue, independent non-profit that promotes public policy to enhance the lives of children and youth in Vermont. For more information, visit [www.voicesforvtkids.org](http://www.voicesforvtkids.org). Follow [Voices for Vermont's Children](#) and this issue on Twitter [@voices4vtkids](#) and on [Facebook](#).

#### **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](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.