



WYOMING KIDS COUNT

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

CONTACT: Samin Dadelahi | 307-721-8300 | samin@wycf.org

Wyoming Ranks 27th in Latest National Rankings for Child Well-Being

Wyoming drops from 1st to 11th in economic well-being, continues to struggle with health for kids

LARAMIE, Wyo., June 13, 2017 — The 2017 *KIDS COUNT*® *Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation finds that while overall child well-being has improved for most kids and families across the country, many Wyoming children are seeing conditions worsen.

The 2017 *Data Book* ranks states based on four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Drops in some of Wyoming's rankings may reflect the state's tough economy; other domains, such as Wyoming's health ranking, point to a nagging issue.

"Our ranking has been continually low in the health domain," says Samin Dadelahi, Chief Operating Officer at the Wyoming Community Foundation. She notes the state's health ranking was 48 in last year's *Data Book* and is ranked at 50th in the current report. Part of that drop has been due to the recession that Wyoming has been dealing with for the past couple of years. Mandatory budget cuts have resulted in the loss of jobs that included health benefits for a number of families.

"Nearly every other state saw a drop in the number of children without health insurance, but Wyoming had a jump of 3,000 kids in just one year," says Dadelahi, "which means an unacceptable 8 percent of Wyoming's kids are without health insurance, according to the data."

Unsurprisingly, another domain in which Wyoming saw a drop in ranking was economic well-being. According to the 2017 *Data Book*, 18,000 Wyoming kids live in poverty and a surprising 10 percent of teens — up from 4 percent from last year's rankings — are not in school and not working. While Wyoming's ranking for economic well-being is still high overall, the state continues to see more cuts to government spending, job losses and people exiting the state due to lack of work.

According to this year's *Data Book*, Wyoming ranks:

- **11th in economic well-being.** The economic well-being domain examines data related to child poverty, family employment, housing costs and whether older teens not in school are working.
- **15th in the family and community domain.** This domain examines the percentage of children living in high-poverty areas, single-parent households and education levels among heads of households, as well as teen birth rates.

- **29th in education.** This domain examines the percentage of children ages 3 and 4 not attending school, fourth graders not proficient in reading, eighth graders not proficient in math, and high school students not graduating on time. This indicator should not be compared to previous years due to a change in data collection of high school students not graduating on time.
- **50th in health.** The health domain looks at the percentage of children who lack health insurance, child and teen death rates, low-birth weight babies, and alcohol or drug abuse among teens.

The *2017 Data Book* shows that government policies, such as expansions to Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) as well as the earned income tax credit, have helped drive positive outcomes for families and children nationwide, even as the United States emerged from the recession. Wyoming will need to make difficult choices in the year ahead, but keeping policies in place that support our kids is crucial to a bright future.

“We all know that our state is facing tough times,” says Dadelahi, “but families who struggle to make ends meet face even greater challenges. It’s important we do our best to maintain the programs that support these families. In the long run, it will strengthen our communities and our state’s kids will benefit.”

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 *2017 Data Book* can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

###

About the Wyoming Community Foundation

The Wyoming Community Foundation is a statewide, nonprofit organization that connects people who care with causes that matter to build a better Wyoming. In 2016 the Wyoming Community Foundation worked with donors to grant over \$8 million to nonprofits across the state.

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.