



UNDER EMBARGO until Wednesday, June 27 at 12:01 a.m. ET

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Undercount of Massachusetts Children Could Affect Federally Funded Supports

2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book shows how a 2020 census undercount could harm childhood health, education, economic well-being, and family stability.

BOSTON — As the nation heads toward the 2020 census, new estimates show that 104,000 (29 percent) of the state’s youngest children live in neighborhoods where the census has historically had difficulty achieving an accurate count.

Counting all people in the state accurately plays an important role in determining federal funding for communities. While Massachusetts is ranked second in the nation on child well-being, according to the *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, an undercount of Massachusetts children could adversely impact the programs and supports that have aided the state’s progress and allowed children to thrive.

“It’s important for everyone in Massachusetts to be counted in the census, so we can get an accurate picture of the challenges our state faces and the solutions that can address them,” said Noah Berger, president of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center. “Accurate census counts help determine the proper representation in Congress for each state and provide the high-quality data that researchers and policymakers rely on to craft effective public policies, including those that aim to expand opportunity for young people in all our neighborhoods.”

An undercount could affect the services that help the families make ends meet. In Fiscal Year 2015, the federal government supported Massachusetts children in a variety of ways, such as through \$280.9 million for special education services, \$146.9 for the Head Start program, and \$76.3 million for affordable child care.

The annual *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains — health, education, economic well-being, and family and community — as an assessment of child well-being. Massachusetts ranks second overall. According to the *Data Book*, Massachusetts leads the nation in health measures, reading levels and mathematic achievement, but the share of children living in poverty is the same as it was in 2010 — 14 percent. Within each domain, Massachusetts ranks:

- **11th in economic well-being.** The share of Massachusetts children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment decreased by 10 percent since 2010.
- **Second in education.** Massachusetts children remain first in mathematic achievement (with 50 percent of eighth-graders scoring at or above proficient level) and reading level (with 51 percent of fourth-graders scoring at or above proficient level). The number of 3- and 4-year olds attending school has stayed essentially the same since 2009-2011.
- **First in health.** The state remains first in the nation in ensuring children have health insurance and has seen a slight decrease since 2010 in the percent of babies born with a low birthweight.
- **Ninth in family and community domain.** The state has seen a 47 percent drop in teen birth rates since 2010, and has seen a slight decrease in the number of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods. In 2016, about 8 percent of children lived in high-poverty neighborhoods.

Massachusetts’ rankings on economic well-being and in the family and community domain indicate that raising the incomes of low- to middle-income families and improving employment opportunities remain



important challenges for the Commonwealth. To get an accurate scope of the challenges, however, requires an accurate census count.

“If we don’t count all children in Massachusetts, we may not get a full picture of their needs,” said Nancy Wagman, director of KIDS COUNT® in Massachusetts. “This could affect the estimates for resources that go to classrooms, that provide health care, and that support other essential programs.”

Release Information

The 2018 *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* will be available June 27 at 12:01 a.m. 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.

About MassBudget

MassBudget is an independent nonprofit organization that provides nonpartisan research and analysis of state budget and tax policies, as well as economic issues that affect low- and moderate-income people in Massachusetts. MassBudget is home to KIDS COUNT® in Massachusetts.

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.

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