

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

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**Expected 2020 Census Undercount Puts 73,000 NC Children at Risk**  
*Decade of damage could be ahead for families and state programs*

RALEIGH—With 73,000 North Carolina children at risk of not being counted in the upcoming 2020 census, federally-funded support that has driven child and youth success are in jeopardy, according to the *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

North Carolina ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> for child well-being nationally, and the state has shown improvement in many indicators over the past year. However, the potential undercount of young children, particularly children of color, could threaten hundreds of millions in federal funding for children's health, education, and safety. More than \$5 billion of North Carolina's federal funding for children's services is at stake, so it's critical to get the count right.

"Nearly 50 percent of North Carolina's children are living in poor or low-income households. It's critical that we get an accurate count because we can't afford to lose a single cent of the funds that come to the state to promote their well-being. When kids aren't counted, state and local infrastructures face losing billions of federal dollars for supports—like education, school lunches, Head Start, Medicaid, SNAP, and CHIP—that give kids the opportunity for a healthy start at life," said Whitney Tucker, research director at NC Child.

Estimates indicate that by 2050 the majority of children in North Carolina will be children of color. Previous census results have shown kids of color, low-income children and children in immigrant families to be at high risk of being undercounted. If missed in the count, these children also stand to suffer the most if vital programs face reductions in funding.

In North Carolina, the undercount of children in the 2000 census led to inadequate funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). As a result, eligible children were put on a waiting list and went uninsured until additional funding was secured.

"We will count on children of all races and ethnicities to build America's future, so the country must count all children in this upcoming census, so we can direct funding to meet their needs," said Casey Foundation President and CEO Patrick McCarthy. "It's not too late to ensure we conduct a census that leads to proper funding, representation and programs for the continued healthy development of kids. But it's up to policymakers, communities and the nation to make sure that every kid is counted and matters."

**North Carolina Trends in Child Well-Being**

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. North Carolina ranks:

- **32<sup>nd</sup> in economic well-being.** While family economic security remains a challenge in North Carolina, families have experienced significant progress with a 12 percent

decrease in the percentage of children living in poverty compared to 2010, which is slightly less than the 14 percent decrease nationally.

- **22<sup>nd</sup> in education.** Education is an area where North Carolina scores above the national average for eighth-grade math (22<sup>nd</sup>) and fourth-grade reading proficiency (14<sup>th</sup>).
- **36<sup>th</sup> in the family and community domain.** Teen birth rates are at an all-time low nationwide, and North Carolina's teen birth rate has dropped by 42 percent between 2010 and 2016 with only 22 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19. Unfortunately, North Carolina continues to struggle with other indicators in this realm, including:
  - percent of children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma (13 percent; state ranking: 39<sup>th</sup>);
  - percent of single-parent households (36 percent; state ranking: 33<sup>rd</sup>) and
  - percent of children living in high-poverty areas (13 percent; state ranking: 34<sup>th</sup>).
- **29<sup>th</sup> in health.** North Carolina continues to struggle in promoting healthy birth outcomes, ranking 43<sup>rd</sup> in the country in the percentage of low-birth weight babies (9.2 percent). On a positive note, only 4 percent of children lacked health insurance in 2016, a 50 percent decrease since 2010.

The *2018 Data Book* shows that a stronger economy is producing better outcomes for parents and their kids, but this improvement is not without important caveats. The percentage of North Carolina children living in poverty has dropped from a high of 26 percent in 2011 to 22 percent in 2016. Nonetheless, in 2016, 13 percent of kids lived in a high-poverty neighborhood, a slight increase since 2012.

These data points suggest that the economic recovery has not made its way to areas of concentrated poverty where North Carolina children are at highest risk of negative outcomes. Unfortunately, it is precisely these areas that stand to lose the most in the event of a census undercount.

### Release Information

The *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* will be available June 27 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).

### About NC Child

NC Child builds a strong North Carolina by advancing public policies to ensure all children – regardless of race, ethnicity, or place of birth – have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. For more information, visit [www.ncchild.org](http://www.ncchild.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](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.