



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

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Latest National Rankings for Child Well-Being Show Pennsylvania at 17th

HARRISBURG, Pennsylvania — The latest report from one of the most comprehensive national reviews of child well-being shows Pennsylvania with gains in education as well as family and community, but poor performance in economic well-being.

The *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ranks Pennsylvania 17th in the country for overall child well-being. The *Data Book* uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains: education, health, economic well-being and family and community.

This year's *Data Book* also elevates concerns about the likely undercount of young children in the 2020 census.

“Pennsylvania made some improvements in the education and family and community domains, but investments in early learning and public education are still badly needed if we want to ensure all students can meet the state’s rigorous academic standards,” said Joan Benso, president and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC). “With nearly one out of every six children in Pennsylvania at risk of being undercounted in the upcoming census, we cannot rely on federal supports to drive our children’s success. Greater state investments in evidence-based home visiting programs, high-quality pre-k and K-12 education will provide children with the tools they need to be successful.”

According to the *Data Book*, Pennsylvania now ranks:

- **10th in education:** The education domain looks at early education opportunities, reading and math proficiency and whether high school students graduate on time. Pennsylvania ranks above average for on-time graduation rates at 86 percent. However, a majority of fourth-graders in the state (60 percent) scored below proficient in reading and nearly two-out-of-three students in eighth grade (62 percent) were not proficient in math.
- **15th in health:** The health domain looks at the percentage of children who lack health insurance, child and teen death rates, low-birthweight babies and alcohol and

drug abuse among teens. The state continued to see a reduction in the percentage of children lacking health insurance, which fell 20 percent from 2010 to 2016. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, nearly 1.4 million children in Pennsylvania have access to affordable, quality health care coverage through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), allowing the state to reach the very low rate of 4 percent of children lacking health insurance, in line with the national average.

- **23rd 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. Pennsylvania continues to experience slow economic growth and there has been little change since 2010 with far too many children – nearly one in five – still living in poverty.
- **24th 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. The state saw a drop in the teen birth rate, however, the number of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods increased. More needs to be done to ensure the well-being of our families and communities.

“Setting Pennsylvania children on a path to academic success starts with investments in early learning programs and a public education system that gives all children a chance to succeed,” Benso said. “We also need to support programs like evidence-based home visiting and high-quality pre-k, and we need to increase state investments in basic, career and technical education, which supports the development and success of our most vulnerable children.”

Release Information

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

About Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) is a strong, effective and trusted voice to improve the health, education and well-being of children and youth in the commonwealth. Since 1992, our public policy victories have helped countless children learn, thrive and succeed, regardless of circumstances. PPC is statewide, independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit.

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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