



UNDER EMBARGO until Monday, June 17 at 12:01 a.m. ET

Contact: Andrew Cutting/Program Fellow, 907-248-7376

acutting@alaskachildrenstrust.org

KIDS COUNT® Data Book Ranks Alaska Among the Worst in the Nation in How We Treat Children

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The 2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows Alaska's children and families are hurting. The purpose of the Data Book is to provide up-to-date information that will lead to policy and program changes that better support children, giving them an opportunity to thrive and live up to their full potential. This is the 30th year the Data Book has outlined how the nation and individual states are faring and while gains have been made since 1990, there is more work to do to ensure all children can thrive.

“Alaska ranks 50th in health and 49th in the education categories. This means our children are faring amongst the worst in the nation,” said ACT President and CEO Trevor Storrs. “It’s time to prioritize our children and their families and make child-centered programs and health care accessible for all Alaskans.”

Alaska also ranked highest in child and teen death rates and the highest in substance abuse rates of any state.

One major concern is the upcoming 2020 census. Alaska is considered at high risk for an undercount. More than 26,000 children would be at risk of losing vital benefits that provide health care, nutrition, education and housing. Since the census is done every 10 years, the lack of funding would have long-lasting consequences and impact those already most vulnerable. Investing in an accurate count is directly tied to the well-being of Alaska's children.

Broadly speaking, children in the United States had a better chance at thriving in 2017 than in 1990 — with improvements in 11 of the 16 KIDS COUNT index measures of child well-being — but racial and ethnic disparities persisted.

Nearly one in five American kids grew up in poverty, presenting tremendous risks to child well-being. Despite economic growth and reduced unemployment, there's been virtually no progress on child poverty since the publication of the first Data Book in 1990.

2017 was the first year since 2010 that saw an increase in the number of uninsured kids. Four million American kids didn't have health insurance. The 5 percent uninsured rate is 62 percent better than it was three decades ago — thanks to the Affordable Care Act, the Children's Health Insurance Program and state-by-state Medicaid expansion.

Low birth weight, which often portends developmental challenges, had increased three years in a row, matching the four-decade high of 8.3 percent of all live births (2006).

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Release Information

The 2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book will be available June 17 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org/databook. 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 Alaska Children's Trust

Alaska Children's Trust (ACT) is the statewide lead organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. ACT has operated as Alaska's KIDS COUNT partner since 2016. The goal of the data is to have timely information available in order to make positive changes in the lives of Alaska's families.

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.