



Council on Children and Families

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New York Press Release

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

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30th Edition Release of the Most Comprehensive Annual Report on Child Well-Being *New York Gains Ground in Health and Education*

ALBANY, NY – The 2019 *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provides an unprecedented assessment of how American children's well-being has changed since the first data book was published 30 years ago. The *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, which highlights many improvements, urges policymakers and child advocates to continue prioritizing policies that expand opportunities for children in each state to ensure children can reach their full potential.

"We are pleased to see the progress made and we also want to remember the humbling first sentence of the original *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, "Children make up one-quarter of this nation's population and all of its future," says Renee Rider, executive director of the New York State Council on Children and Families. "The Council recognizes the value children have in our society and continues to work with our partners to promote excellent health and well-being among *all* New Yorker's, especially our children."

New York Findings from the 2019 *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*

The *Data Book* assesses child well-being using 16 measures that represent the domains of health, education, economic and family well-being. Broadly speaking, these measures of child well-being show improvements for New York's children with improvements in 10 of the 16 measures. The remaining measures showed a decline in progress.

New York ranks among the top five states in the nation with respect to children's health. "This latest ranking reflects New York's steadfast commitment to policies that significantly improve childhood health," said New York State Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker. "While we have made tremendous strides addressing the factors that affect childhood health, we will continue to work towards Governor Cuomo's goal of making New York the healthiest state in the nation for our children."

An overwhelming 97 in 100 New York children have health insurance, which represents a 70 percent improvement since the first *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*. More children than ever are covered. That coverage extends to all children, regardless of their parents' immigrant status.

Other health improvements include considerable reductions in teen deaths and teen alcohol/drug abuse. However, the rate of low birthweight babies slightly increased, moving from 7.6 to 8.1 percent between 1990 and 2017.

The greatest gain within New York's education indicators is the 40 percent reduction in the number of teens, ages 16 to 19 years, who leave high school without graduating. This change is

consistent with education policymakers' practice of using graduation rate data to target where improvements are needed.

Education improvements are also apparent in other education measures. The least progress was observed in the percentage of fourth grade students below proficient reading levels, which declined 12 percent. This area remains a priority given its relationship to overall school success and graduation rates. The inclusion of a chronic absence rate in the New York State Education Department's Report Cards and the New York State Council on Children and Families' Every Student Present awareness campaign work together to increase students' opportunities for school success.

Top Board of Regents and New York State Education Department policymakers have made educational equity a leading priority and the state's accountability system is one strategy being used to advance equity. Betty A. Rosa said, "The Regents and I continue to foster equity and fairness throughout the entire educational system through our implementation of the state's ESSA plan, My Brother's Keeper and other efforts noted in the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*. New York State is committed to ensuring that all students succeed and thrive in school no matter who they are, where they live, where they go to school, or where they come from."

"Fostering equity throughout the educational system is a top priority for the Board of Regents and Education Department, which we are cultivating through mental health instruction, social emotional learning and creating safe learning environments, so our schools are welcoming places for all," New York State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia said. "When we provide students with high-quality learning opportunities, we give them a real chance at success in life. It's critical that we continue to maintain and build upon the gains noted by the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*. I'm confident that our focus on equity will keep New York moving in the right direction."

With respect to economic well-being, the child poverty rate remains relatively constant, showing some fluctuation between 1990 and 2017 (19 percent in 1990; 20 percent in 2017). A promising change is the 21 percent decline of children living in households where no parent has full-time employment because extended data trends have shown that improvements in employment rates tend to be followed by improvements in child poverty. New York's increased support of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) plays a critical role in lifting families above the poverty level.

The economic well-being measure with the most substantial improvement is the percentage of teens, ages 16 to 19 years, who are not attending school and not working. This decreased 30 percent between 1990 and 2017.

The family well-being domain includes a mix of measures that reflect health, education and economics. New York is a strong leader in the reduction of teen births with a 73 percent decline during the period examined. The portion of families headed by someone lacking a high school diploma declined 39 percent while the portion of children in single-parent households increased, as did the portion of children in high-poverty areas.

This year's *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* explores demographic changes in the child population along with the traditional measures of well-being. New York's child population shows increasing diversity among children with a growing portion of children who are Asian. New York experienced a 3 percent decline in its total child population between 1990 and 2017. An accurate count of children is a priority for the upcoming 2020 Census and New York plans to invest \$20 million dollars to ensure an accurate count of all New Yorkers.

Positive changes have occurred since the 1990 *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* was released. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's *KIDS COUNT®* network and the ongoing attention it brings to children's issues has meaningfully contributed to these improvements.

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, 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 the New York State Council on Children and Families

The New York State Council on Children and Families is authorized to coordinate New York state health, education and human services systems to provide more effective systems of care for children and families. Follow the Council on Twitter @nysccf and bookmark our website, <http://www.ccf.ny.gov>.

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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