



children's
defense fund
ohio

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

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More Ohio Parents Have High School Diplomas, Opening Up Economic Opportunity, but Racial Disparities Persist for their Children

30th KIDS COUNT® Data Book provides the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States

COLUMBUS — The share of Latinx children in Ohio whose parents lack a high school degree is nearly three times that of white children — and almost double, for black children— despite more Ohio children having parents with high school degrees than the national average, according to the *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The report ranks Ohio 27th among states in overall child well-being. While there have been important efforts to improve the state of Ohio's children, there is still more work to be done to reduce racial and ethnic disparities that make child poverty more pervasive among children of color. Ohio children's educational attainment and success are influenced by their parents' level of education, but many parents face barriers to accessing educational opportunities and family-sustaining jobs. Ohio can make it easier for the growing number of adults and non-traditional learners to return to school and seek out professional credentials by providing affordable infant and childcare as well as investing in wraparound services that address the holistic needs of families who lack access to resources.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* — the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States — notes measurable progress since the first *Data Book*, which was published in 1990. Nevertheless, more than 13 million U.S. children lived in poverty in 2017 and serious racial and ethnic disparities persist.

"Ohio's future generation is its most diverse yet, and it is important that we direct our attention to the areas where we have not seen equitable improvements across child well-being indicators by race and ethnicity," said Tracy Nájera, executive director of Children's Defense Fund-Ohio. "We must push for policies that level the playing field for all Ohio children."

The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* from the Casey Foundation uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains — economic well-being, education, family and community, and health — as an assessment of child well-being. Ohio, along with the rest of the country, has some major work to do to ensure that prosperity is extended to all of its children.

In 2019, Ohio ranks:

- **23rd in economic well-being.** Approximately 513,000 Ohio children (20 percent) live in poverty.
- **16th in education.** With 60 percent of Ohio eighth graders scoring below proficient in math, compared to 67 percent nationally, Ohio is ranked seventh best in the nation — representing a marked improvement from Ohio’s 1990 rate where 85 percent were not proficient.
- **31st in family and community.** In Ohio, 37 percent of children live in single-parent households, a rate that is 13 percentage points higher than 1990. This is higher than the national rate of 34 percent.
- **29th in health.** The child and teen death rate in Ohio is worse than it is nationally. Although improved since 1990, it has done so at a slower rate than the national rate, ranking Ohio 34th in the nation in this indicator. The black child and teen death rate in Ohio is slightly higher than the rate for other children.

All of the 74 million kids in our increasingly diverse country have the potential for brighter futures , and we have the data, knowledge, and evidence of what it takes to make that vision a reality. We can use what we have learned from the past to promote policies and practices that create more opportunities, not barriers, especially for children of color.

The Casey Foundation points to areas of tremendous improvement in children’s lives — including access to health care, decreased rates of teen childbearing and increased rates of high school graduation — and to policies that create and support this success. The Annie E. Casey Foundation calls on elected officials and representatives to continue to improve conditions for children by taking the following actions:

- *Expand programs that make and keep kids healthy.* For the sake of all children, regardless of their immigration status, states should expand access to Medicaid and continually seek ways to ensure that all children are receiving the care they need to live, learn and thrive into adulthood.
- *Provide the tools proven to help families lift themselves up economically.* Federal and state earned income tax credits (EITC) and child tax credit programs mean working parents can use more of their take-home pay to meet their children’s needs. Making Ohio’s EITC refundable would go a long way in supporting working families with children.
- *Address ethnic and racial inequities.* The national averages of child well-being can mask the reality that black and brown children still face a greater number of obstacles. We must renew our commitments to focus on equity and addressing the root causes of disparities in health, education and economic well-being.
- *Count all kids.* Ensure the 2020 census counts all children, especially those under 5 years old and from hard-to-count areas.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the 30th edition of an annual data study that is based on U.S. Census and other publicly available data, representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

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 Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio

The Children’s Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

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.

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