

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

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## U.S. Child Population Grows and Changes: 74 Million Kids to Shape Future of More Diverse America

*30th KIDS COUNT® Data Book Finds Many Northeast States Leading in Child Well-Being, South and West Seeing Largest Population Growth; Racial and Ethnic Disparities Persist*

BALTIMORE — The Annie E. Casey Foundation today urged policymakers and child advocates to prioritize policies that would expand opportunity for America's 74 million children, noting measurable but still inadequate progress over the past three decades to ensure all children can realize their full potential.

The 30th edition of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* — the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States — notes progress in helping children thrive since the first *Data Book* was published in 1990. But it finds the nation has failed to tear down barriers affecting children of color and underscores that America's future will be brighter if all kids in all communities have the opportunity to thrive.

Among top-line findings: More than 13 million U.S. children live in poverty, and the nation is failing to equip many children, particularly in communities of color, with what they need to reach their full potential.

"America's children are one quarter of our population and 100 percent of our future," said Casey Foundation President and CEO Lisa Hamilton. "All of the 74 million kids in our increasingly diverse country have unlimited potential, and we have the data, knowledge and evidence to create the policies that will help them realize it. It's incumbent on us to do just that."

### **National Findings from the 2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book**

This report compares past data on 16 indicators with figures from 2017, the most recent year available in most cases.

- 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.
- One in six 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).

#### **State Rankings in the 2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book**

- Six of the top 10 states for overall child well-being are in the Northeast. New Hampshire and Massachusetts are again in first and second place, followed by Iowa (3), Minnesota (4), New Jersey (5), Vermont (6), Utah (7), Connecticut (8), Maine (9) and Virginia (10).
- Mississippi (48), Louisiana (49) and New Mexico (50) are again the lowest-ranked states.
- States in the South and West populate the bottom of the overall rankings. These regions contain the 18 lowest-ranked states.

Along with the annual state-by-state rankings, the 2019 *Data Book* explores the growth in America's child population since 1990 — the year the first *Data Book* was published. Among the major developments:

- The U.S. child population increased by more than 9 million from 64.2 million to 73.7 million between 1990 and 2017. Texas (2.5 million more kids), Florida (1.2 million) and California (1.1 million) accounted for half of the nation's total growth.
- All 15 of the states where growth in the child population outpaced the national average since 1990 are in the South or West. Most states that had declines in the child population are in the Northeast and Midwest.
- The percentage of American children who were Latino more than doubled from 12 to 26 percent. The proportion of Asian and Pacific Islander children also doubled, from 3 to 6 percent. The percentage of white children declined from 69 to 53 percent.
- From 1990 to 2017, 38 states and the District of Columbia saw the percentage of children from immigrant families double; 12 have seen those percentages quadruple. More than one in four U.S. children is growing up in an immigrant family.

Direct lines can be drawn between areas of tremendous improvement in well-being — including health insurance coverage, decreased rates of teen childbearing and increased rates of high school graduation — and policies that have supported these successes. Policymakers should take additional steps to help all children thrive. The Casey Foundation calls on elected officials and representatives to:

- *Expand the programs that make and keep kids healthy.* For the sake of all children, regardless of their immigration status, states should expand access to Medicaid.
- *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 devote more take-home pay to meet their children's needs.
- *Tear down obstacles faced by kids of color.* Every child has incredible individual potential, and communities thrive when all kids thrive. African American, Latino and Native American children remain more likely than others to encounter barriers — from living in high-poverty neighborhoods to not having health insurance — to that contribute to disparate outcomes. Our public policies must acknowledge and eliminate those obstacles.

- *Count all kids.* Ensure the 2020 census counts all children, especially those under 5 years old and from hard-to-count areas. The 2010 census missed 2.2 million such kids, and the upcoming count may miss even more if young children are not a priority. The stakes are high: 55 major federal programs, including Head Start and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, allocate more than \$880 billion each year based on census data.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the 30th edition of an annual study based on publicly available data for 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](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://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](http://datacenter.kidscount.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.