



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **2019 National KIDS COUNT® Data Book Displays Growth and Change for U.S. Children**

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation Urges Policymakers and Child Advocates to Prioritize Policies to Expand Opportunity for America's 74 Million Children*

**U.S. Virgin Islands** — Released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 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 live in poverty and serious racial and ethnic disparities persist.

Along with the annual state-by-state rankings, the 2019 *Data Book* explores the growth in America's child population since 1990. While most states have seen a steady increase, there has been a continuous population decline in the U.S. Virgin Islands, both within the general population, and specifically among the child population, within the last decade. The most recent (2016) USVI *KIDS COUNT Data Book* reflects this trend, with children continuously representing a smaller portion of each island's population. [In 2015](#), there were 19,730 children (birth to age 18) in the USVI representing 15,697 fewer children than in the year 1990. This trend likely only has been exacerbated by the two Category 5 storms experienced in 2017, as families relocated to the continental United States or children were sent to finish schooling with relatives. The upcoming 2020 census will be a critical opportunity to glean an understanding of the continued population shifts in the Territory.

The *2019 Data Book* shows how essential accurate data are to sound policymaking. The 2010 census missed 2.2 million children under age 5, and the upcoming count may miss even more if young children are not a priority. From federal programming to monetary allocation, a comprehensive picture of the U.S. Virgin Islands is a critical component to planning for the future needs of this community's children.

The Casey Foundation points to areas of tremendous improvement in children's lives nationally — including access to health care, decreased rates of teen childbearing and increased rates of high school graduation — and draws a direct line to policies that support this success. Especially as the national child population is expanding, there are steps that policymakers should take 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. Specifically, for the U.S Virgin Islands, attention to this issue is critical with the coming fiscal cliff as federal funding for Medicaid expires at the end of the year, which will put current Medicaid funding and programmatic capacities in jeopardy.
- *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.
- *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.
- *Count all kids.* Ensure the 2020 census counts all children, including those under 5 years old and from hard-to-count areas. Involvement in campaign efforts and inclusion among our most vulnerable in the count is critical.

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. No data are reported for the Virgin Islands in the *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* because the Territory is not included in most national surveys and datasets from which the data are sourced. A *Data Book* for the U.S Virgin Islands is released annually, produced by the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands and based on local data from local agencies and the Virgin Islands Community Survey. A *Data Book* for the U.S Virgin Islands is expected to be released by CFVI this summer.

## Release Information

The national *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).

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**About the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands**

*For more than 25 years, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands has been bringing positive changes in the Territory through programs committed to youth, learning, family support and the environment. With a professional staff and a volunteer Board of Directors composed of local community leaders, CFVI is a leading advocate and supporter of programs that give children the best starts possible while ensuring opportunity and sustainability for our community in the future. CFVI operates or funds close to 50 community programs, including KIDS COUNT, scholarships, teacher grants, and emergency grants to families and elderly residents of the USVI. CFVI is a registered nonprofit entirely supported by individual donors, grants, trusts, corporate donations, and estate planning.*

**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.*