



**UNDER EMBARGO Until Monday, June 21, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. ET**

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## **Maryland Data Show Families Took Significant Hit During Pandemic**

*Key Policies Can Assist Maryland's Young People on Road to Recovery, Annie E. Casey Foundation Report Finds*

**Baltimore, Maryland** — Maryland's young people and families need continued focus from policymakers now more than ever as the state's overall ranking for child well-being is 24<sup>th</sup>—highlighting a further decline from the previous year, according to the **2021 KIDS COUNT® Data Book**, a 50-state report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that analyzes how families have fared between the Great Recession and the COVID-19 crisis. Maryland's ranked 21<sup>st</sup> in 2020.

This year's *Data Book* supports the direction of Maryland's policymakers who have acted boldly this legislative session by addressing education, health care, child welfare, youth justice, and family economic supports not only to address disparities both highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic but also to set the stage for a robust, equitable recovery.

"The *Data Book* shows simply returning to a pre-pandemic level of support for children and families would shortchange many children and fail to address persistent racial and ethnic disparities," said Mariama Boney, interim executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth.

Sixteen indicators measuring four domains – economic wellbeing, education, health, and family and community context – are used by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in each year's *Data Book* to assess child well-being. The annual KIDS COUNT data and rankings for Maryland represent the most recent information available but do not capture the impact of the past year. However, key findings show:

- **ECONOMIC WELL BEING:** In 2019, 157,000 or 13% of children lived in households with an income below the poverty line and ranks Maryland as 23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation.
- **EDUCATION:** In 2019, 77,000 three-to-four-year-old children or 49% were not in school between 2017 and 2019 and ranks Maryland as 20<sup>th</sup> in the nation.
- **AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE:** In 2019, 48,000 (5%) children did not have health insurance and ranks Maryland as 27<sup>th</sup> in the nation.
- **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY:** In 2019, 53,000 or 4% of children lived in high poverty areas and ranks Maryland as 23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation.



In addition, survey data from the last year add to the story of Maryland children and families in this moment:

- During the pandemic in Maryland, in 2020, 9% of adults with children under 18 years old in the household lacked health insurance.
- However, by March 2021, this figure had improved to 7% suggesting that Maryland is experiencing the beginnings of a recovery.

“These statistics are not just numbers as they represent the lives of our children,” said Nonso Umunna, research director at Advocates for Children and Youth, “Crafting recommendations to invest in children, families, and communities is a priority to ensure an equitable and expansive recovery.”

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has made some suggestions, and several have already been enacted in the American Rescue Plan. Additional recommendations include:

- **Congress should make the expansion of the child tax credit permanent.** The child tax credit has long had bipartisan support, so lawmakers should find common cause and ensure the largest one-year drop ever in child poverty is not followed by a surge.
- **State and local governments should prioritize the recovery of hard-hit communities of color.**
- **States should expand income support that helps families care for their children.** Permanently extending unemployment insurance eligibility to contract, gig and other workers and expanding state tax credits would benefit parents and children.
- **States that have not done so should expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.** The American Rescue Plan offers incentives to do so.
- **States should strengthen public schools and pathways to postsecondary education and training.**

“We must continue to work with our community, coalition partners work, legislators and state officials to improve child well-being so that every young person can achieve their full potential,” said Boney, “It is no longer an option but a necessity.”

### Release Information

The 2021 KIDS COUNT® Data Book will be available June 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at [www.acy.org](http://www.acy.org). Additional information is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://www.aecf.org/databook). Journalists interested in creating maps, graph, and rankings in stories about the Data Book can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center



at [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org). Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs, and rankings in stories about the Kids Count report can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at <https://www.acy.org/research-post/kidscount-data-center/>.

Join us on **Tuesday, June 29, 2021 at 1PM EDT** for our webinar, **Safety Nets: Stronger and Secure Families** where we will review critical child well-being data. To register for this free webinar, click here: <https://bit.ly/3yo6gXO>.

#### **About Advocates for Children and Youth**

Advocates for Children and Youth is a statewide, nonpartisan advocacy nonprofit in Maryland and the state affiliate in the Kids Count network. Our mission is to build a strong Maryland by advancing policies and programs to ensure children and families of every race, ethnicity, and place of birth achieve their full potential. For more specific statewide information, visit <https://www.acy.org/research-post/data-sheets>.

#### **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.

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