



# Children's Action Alliance

*A Voice for Arizona's Children for Over 25 Years*

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE until  
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**CONTACT:** Dana Wolfe Naimark  
dnaimark@azchildren.org  
(602) 266-0707 (work)  
(602) 882-5755 (cell)

## **TRENDS FOR ARIZONA KIDS CAN BRING ATTENTION AND ACTION**

State and National *KIDS COUNT*® *Data Books* Detail Problems and Progress

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Phoenix, AZ - Children's Action Alliance, in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, released two new comprehensive data reports so leaders in the state can be better informed to create action steps that improve children's health, education, and security. The *Arizona KIDS COUNT*® *Data Book* complements the 25th Edition of the national *KIDS COUNT*® *Data Book* by delving into county level statistics, adding more indicators not found in the national research, and including personal stories to illustrate the key benchmarks.

Some of the statistics in the research include:

- The rate of juveniles arrested for violent crimes dropped by almost half from 2000 to 2013
- 12 counties had more than half of their children living in low income families
- 67 percent of Arizona 3 and 4 year olds are not attending preschool, ranging from 54% in Coconino County to 82% in Santa Cruz County
- Arizona ranks 46th in the nation on overall conditions for children – only one spot better than in last year's *Data Book*

"The data trends point to key areas where state leadership can move the needle for kids," said Dana Wolfe Naimark, president and CEO of Children's Action Alliance. "During this campaign season we expect every candidate running for Governor and our state legislature to use the data to develop policy positions and plans that will improve conditions for children."

Although the rate of children living in poverty has increased in 10 of the 15 Arizona counties since 2000, the support available to help them overcome the challenges they face has significantly dropped.

As a share of statewide income, state revenues dropped 24 percent between 2000 and 2013 and state spending has followed this downward trend. Total state funding per K-12 student dropped 8 percent between 2000 and 2013. Budget cuts also froze many children out of key services, such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and child care vouchers. As a result, the percentage of children participating in these services dropped just as the need expanded.

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There is some good news. The percentage of babies born to mothers without a high school education decreased by more than a third at the state level – from 30 percent to 19 percent – between 2000 and 2012 and by double digits in every single county during the same time frame. In addition, the rate of arrests of juveniles for a violent crime dropped in all but one county between 2000 and 2013.

“On several fronts, we’ve seen the difference that smart policies, effective programs and high quality practice can make in improving child well-being and long term outcomes,” said Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of The Annie E. Casey Foundation, which has produced the national *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* each year since 1990.

Betty Mathis, CEO of Wesley Community & Health Center in South Phoenix, agreed. “At our Center we see firsthand how government, families and neighborhoods, and private charity can work together to change lives for the better.”

To view how Arizona ranks in all 16 indicators, visit the *KIDS COUNT®* website (<http://datacenter.kidscount.org>) starting at 9:00 p.m. Arizona time, July 21, 2014.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* features the latest data on child well-being for every state, the District of Columbia and the nation. This information is available in the [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#), which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of measures of child well-being. Data Center users can create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and view real-time information on mobile devices.

The *Arizona KIDS COUNT® Data Book* is available on the Children's Action Alliance website under the menu heading **Issues/KIDS COUNT**.

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*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.*

*Children’s Action Alliance is an independent voice for Arizona children at the state capitol and in the community. CAA works to improve children’s health, education, and security through information and action.*