



Kids Count Alaska

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1.7 Million More Children Live in Low-Income Working Families Today Than in Midst of Great Recession

Alaska sees largest improvement in state rankings in annual assessment of child well-being

In the 2015 *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, the national assessment of how kids are faring in each state published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Alaska ranks 27 in overall well-being for children, a marked improvement from its rank of 33 last year.

Every year, the Casey Foundation collects data on child well-being in four specific areas: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community.

For the first time in a nearly a decade, a non-New England state ranks number one for overall child well-being. Minnesota holds the top spot, followed by New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Iowa, and Vermont. Arizona, Nevada, Louisiana, New Mexico and Mississippi rank lowest. Alaska saw the biggest improvement from last year's *Data Book*, followed by Minnesota, Wyoming and South Carolina.

Alaska's rank in health improved from 46th in the country to 31st this year. Alaska is among the states with the lowest percentage of teens who abused alcohol or drugs. At the same time, Alaska continues to be one of the most dangerous states for children aged 1-19. Conversely, Alaska ranks 50th in its child and teen death rate.

Alaska continues to rank among the best in the country with the lowest percentage of babies born at low birth weight, infant mortality, and children living in poverty. Still, more than 22,000 children in Alaska are living in poverty.

This annual assessment of the welfare of Alaska's children is a good reminder that change takes consistent effort and time. With limited resources it is especially important to invest in programs that are shown to work.

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