



## Council on Children and Families

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### **2015 KIDS COUNT Data Book ranks New York highly for children's health; average on other measures**

ALBANY — The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2015 *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book*, released today, ranks New York ninth in the nation in children's health and in the middle range of states for overall child well-being. State rankings are based on 16 measures in the areas of health, education, economic security, and family and community. The *Data Book* revealed that New York children experienced improvement or remained the same in 11 of the 16 measures of child well-being. Currently, 96 in 100 children in New York have health insurance. New York ranked 19th in education, showing some progress in measures of fourth-grade reading, eighth-grade math and students graduating high school on time.

Two key areas of child well-being—economic well-being and family and community—continue to pose challenges. Two measures related to family and community well-being improved while two measures weakened; economic well-being weakened in two of the four measures assessed. In particular, 23 percent of New York's children live in poverty—up from 19 percent in 2008.

#### **Strengthening opportunities for New York's children**

National and state level policies have proved that investments in health and education can create lasting positive differences for children. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides low-cost health coverage to children, was implemented 15 years ago and has drastically reduced the number of children without health insurance. In addition, federal tax credits and food stamps coupled with generous state tax credits have helped lift children and their families out of poverty.

The Casey Foundation offers a number of recommendations to make good on the American promise of opportunity for all children. The Foundation promotes a two-generation strategy that simultaneously addresses the needs of children directly while providing tools and resources to their parents. Three critical strategies include:

- Provide parents with multiple pathways to get family-supporting jobs and achieve financial stability.
  - New York's Unemployment Strike Force, a multi-pronged campaign to target areas of the state with the highest unemployment rates, is helping individuals and families—approximately 4,000 Bronx residents have found employment through job recruitment and career services.
  - A reasonable increase in the minimum wage could benefit workers and ensure the most vulnerable members of the workforce are able to contribute to the economy.
- Ensure access to high-quality early childhood education and enriching elementary school experiences.
  - The \$25 million expansion of pre-kindergarten, particularly in communities with high student needs, is increasing access to quality early learning programs, providing children across the state with opportunities that level the playing field and help them become ready for school.
  - Leaders of the Rochester-Monroe County Anti-Poverty Task Force are identifying local strategies that will advance early learning and combat poverty.
- Equip parents to better support their children socially and emotionally and to advocate for their kids' education.
  - Programs such as the Pyramid Model, which will soon be implemented in areas of the state, will help early learning staff support parents in ways to help children develop the skills they need to foster healthy relationships and succeed.

Detailed recommendations that promote two-generation strategies can be found in the 2014 report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, [Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach.](#)

The Council on Children and Families is authorized to coordinate the state health, education and human services systems as a means to provide more effective systems of care for children and families. Follow the Council on Twitter @nysccf and bookmark our website, <http://www.ccf.ny.gov>.

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