



SOUTH DAKOTA KIDS COUNT  
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## South Dakota Moves Up Four Places in Annual Rankings of Child Well-Being

*KIDS COUNT Data Book shows SD fell in health but improved in family and community indicators*

VERMILLION, S.D. (June 21, 2016) – South Dakota was one of seven states to show a marked improvement in ranking in the annual *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, which measures child well-being, moving from 18<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> place. The last time South Dakota ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation was 2004. Some of the indicators contributing to the improved ranking were decreased rates of teen substance abuse, improved access to health insurance and a lower teen birth rate.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* bases state rankings on 16 indicators in four categories: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. This year's *Data Book* examines the influence of parents' education, health, and other life circumstances on their children's well-being. South Dakota ranked sixth in economic well-being (sixth last year), 26<sup>th</sup> in health (down from 20<sup>th</sup> last year), 31<sup>st</sup> in education, (up from 32<sup>nd</sup> last year), and 19<sup>th</sup> in family and community (up from 23<sup>rd</sup> last year). Overall, South Dakota ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation in child well-being.

“The annual assessment of the welfare of South Dakota’s children is a good reminder that all children in South Dakota deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential,” said Carole Cochran, project director for South Dakota KIDS COUNT. “Improving our ranking among the states is great but we need to make sure that South Dakota is doing the best for kids. The Data Book provides the numbers to get us there.”

This year’s trend data is for 2008 through 2014. For the 16 indicators, South Dakota worsened on two indicators: the percent of eighth graders not proficient in math (from 61 percent to 66 percent); and the percent of children ages 3 and 4 not attending school (60 percent to 61 percent). Seven indicators showed improvement and seven showed no change. Although the percent of children in poverty showed no change, more than 37,000 children in South Dakota live in poverty, which is almost one in five.

South Dakota improved in three indicators in the Health Domain: children without health insurance, child and teen deaths, and teens who abuse alcohol or drugs. Even though the low birth weight babies indicator remained unchanged from 2008, there was an increase in the number and percent of babies born at a low birth weight during the past several years that may have contributed to the drop in the domain ranking from 20<sup>th</sup> last year to 26<sup>th</sup>. A lower number of teen births and fewer children living in single parent families boosted the Family and Community domain up four places in rank.

The 2016 Data Book will be available June 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data

on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. The Data Center allows users to create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and to view real-time information on mobile devices.

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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<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.*

*Founded in 1862, the University of South Dakota is designated as the only public liberal arts university in the state and is home to a comprehensive College of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, the state's only School of Law, School of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, the accredited Beacom School of Business and the College of Fine Arts. USD has an enrollment of more than 10,000 students taught by more than 400 faculty members. <http://www.usd.edu/university-relations>*

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