



**UNDER EMBARGO until Tuesday, June 13, 2017, 12:01 a.m. EDT**

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## **Delaware Continues “Middle of the Pack” Status in Latest National Rankings for Child Well-Being**

*Improvement in health and education, including 97 percent children with health insurance*

**WILMINGTON, Del., June 13, 2017** — The 2017 *KIDS COUNT*<sup>®</sup> *Data Book* report, issued today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, reveals continued progress in health and education for Delaware children, but the state is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> nationally for overall child well-being.

In recent years, government policies have helped drive positive outcomes in the lives of children, and particularly in child health. Notably, Delaware has seen a 40 percent drop in its percentage of children lacking health insurance since 2010. Nationally, only 5 percent of U.S. children lack health care coverage — a historic low, due to the combination of key provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and expansions to Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). As a state, Delaware surpasses this national milestone, with just 3 percent of its kids going without health insurance.

Unfortunately, a rise in the state’s child poverty rate is emerging as a worrisome trend for Delaware, with 39,000 children living below the poverty line. Additionally, consistent with persistent concentrations of poverty nationwide, the percentage of children living in high-poverty areas has increased by 25 percent compared to 2008-2012 data. The percentage of children living in single-parent families has also risen since 2010.

“Children’s experiences today shape the adults that they will grow into tomorrow, impacting our collective long-term success,” said Janice Barlow, director of Kids Count at the University of Delaware. “Therefore, it is critical to measure and to understand the conditions in which children live so that we can invest our time, effort and resources to ensure the best return on investment for Delaware.”

The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains — health, education, economic well-being and family and community — that represent what children need most to thrive.

Compared to last year's *Data Book*, Delaware moved up four spots in health and now ranks 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation. However, it slipped 11 spots in child economic well-being, down to 29<sup>th</sup>. The state is also ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in education and 26<sup>th</sup> in family and community.

In the *Data Book*, the Annie E. Casey Foundation offers a number of recommendations for how policy makers can ensure all children can reach their full potential.

- **HEALTH- Maintain health care programs.** Reaching 95 percent of all U.S. children with health insurance is a tremendous achievement that should not be jeopardized. Provide continued investments at the federal and state levels. Remove systemic barriers that prevent families from enrolling their children in health coverage programs.
- **EDUCATION- Invest in early childhood education programs.** Science has taught us that the first few years of development can position a child for success in school and life. Supporting early childhood education opportunities at the local, state and federal levels enables children to reach critical milestones that lead to lifetime success.
- **ECONOMIC- Expand programs that create economic stability for families.** The EITC, at the federal level and in many states, has become a cornerstone in helping low-income families meet basic needs. Offering tax breaks for child care can help working parents better balance their financial responsibilities.

### **Release Information**

The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available June 13 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://www.aecf.org/databook), which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the *Data Book* can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org).

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### **About KIDS COUNT in Delaware**

KIDS COUNT in Delaware is a collaborative effort of over forty organizations and is housed within the Center for Community Research and Service at the University of Delaware. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT in Delaware seeks to enrich local and state discussion concerning ways to secure better lives for all of Delaware's children. Please visit our website [www.dekidscount.org](http://www.dekidscount.org) to learn more about our important work. Follow KIDS COUNT in Delaware and this issue on Twitter @dekidscount and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/dekidscount>.

### **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.