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Indiana Ranks 28th in Nation for Child Well-being

Indiana sees gains in economic indicators, struggles in health for kids

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., June 13, 2017 — Despite economic improvements for Hoosier kids, Indiana once again finds itself in the middle of the pack when it comes to the overall well-being of our children. The national *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ranks Indiana 28th in the nation for child well-being, while New Hampshire is ranked first and Mississippi last.

Indiana saw strong improvement in child economic well-being in the last year, jumping five spots to 19th place and finishing with the highest ranking among its neighboring states. Ohio ranks 22nd, Illinois is 25th, Michigan is 31st and Kentucky is 39th in the nation.

When compared to 2010, data show there are fewer Hoosier children living in poverty (21 percent), fewer living in families where no parent has a full-time, year-round job (28 percent) and fewer living in families that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs (25 percent).

The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* measures child well-being in four domains – family and community, economic, education and health. These domains represent what children need most to thrive. In addition to its economic ranking, Indiana ranks 31st in the family and community domain, 35th in health and 14th in education.

In addition to economic gains, the data also show there are fewer uninsured children in the state and that the percentage of Hoosier teens abusing drugs and alcohol declined nearly 30 percent from 2009 to 2014.

Despite these improvements, the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* does reveal areas of concern for Hoosier kids.

“While we are encouraged by the strides our state has made, we still have a lot work to do in other areas,” says Tami Silverman, president and CEO of the Indiana Youth Institute.

Indiana continues to struggle with the percentage of children living in high-poverty areas. At 13 percent, this represents more than 200,000 children and an 18 percent increase compared to 2008-2012 data.

“Research shows that children living in high-poverty areas are at greater risk for adverse experiences and have fewer educational opportunities,” Silverman said. “This combination of factors limits their chances to succeed in adulthood.”

The state also saw a troubling 11 percent increase in the child and teen death rate from 2010 to 2015, ranking Indiana 37th in the nation. The Indiana State Department of Health Annual Mortality Reports indicate a consistent increase across several categories, including homicides and suicides. Accidental deaths declined during this same period.

Additionally, Indiana students appear to be struggling in some educational areas. Data show that 61 percent of Hoosier eighth-grade students are not proficient in math, and 60 percent of fourth graders are not proficient in reading. At the same time, the percentage of Indiana’s 3- and 4-year-olds not attending school has remained fairly stagnant since 2009.

“We are not seeing the gains we would hope for when it comes to pre-K in Indiana,” Silverman says. “Research shows that investments in high-quality pre-K programs produce academic, social-emotional and workforce development benefits. Children from lower-income families reap the biggest gains.”

“Indiana’s leaders must continue to focus on improving all aspects of our children’s education, health, economic and family-and-community situations,” Silverman added. “We must ensure we are meeting the needs of the whole child, and giving all Hoosier children the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their circumstances. Our kids deserve to do more than survive; they deserve to thrive!”

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Release Information

The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book*® will be available June 13 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at 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.

About the Indiana Youth Institute

The Indiana Youth Institute’s mission is to promote the healthy development of Indiana children and youth by serving the people, institutions and communities that impact their well-being.

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. KIDS COUNT is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.