



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

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Oregon in Bottom Half of States in Latest National Child Well-Being Rankings

Education and economic well-being show greatest room for improvement for kids

PORTLAND, Ore., June 13, 2017 — Despite a strong economy, Oregon has fallen behind a majority of states in the welfare of its children, ranking 31st in overall child well-being, according to the *2017 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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.

In education, with a ranking of 40, Oregon’s kids lag far behind. This is due to the third highest percentage of high schoolers *not* graduating on time in the nation and below grade level reading proficiency among nearly two-thirds of our fourth graders. Pre-K attendance also was lower in Oregon than in a number of other states, as well as the national average, with 57 percent of children ages 3 and 4 not attending early learning or preschool programs.

“We must prioritize our children’s education if we don’t want to see our state fall further behind national trends,” said Tonia Hunt, executive director of Children First for Oregon. “The future of Oregon’s economy, civic engagement and way of life depends on the success of our next generation.”

According to the *Data Book*, Oregon ranks:

- **21st in the family and community domain.** A steady decrease in Oregon’s teen birth rate since 2010 is a positive trend for Oregon’s families.
- **21st in health.** Oregon continues to have a low rate of child and teen deaths and is below the national average for percentage of low-birthweight babies. Only 4 percent of Oregon children are not covered by health insurance.
- **30th in economic well-being.** Despite low unemployment in Oregon, one in five children still lives in poverty.
- **40th in education.** More than a quarter of Oregon high school students did not graduate on time in 2014-15, compared to 17 percent nationally.

“Investing in children works. For example, in 2009, Oregon lawmakers made a conscious decision to expand access to public health insurance coverage. Since then, uninsured rates have decreased. The KIDS COUNT Data Book shows that need more of that to improve education and

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economic outcomes for kids,” said Hunt. “Now is the time to make investments in Oregon children – not cuts.”

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.

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About Children First for Oregon

Children First for Oregon is a statewide, nonprofit organization whose mission is to make long-term systemic change by advocating for the adoption of policies and programs that keep children healthy and safe, and strengthen families. Learn more at www.cffo.org.

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.