



SOUTH DAKOTA KIDS COUNT
BEACOM SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
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UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL

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South Dakota Ranks 21st in Latest National Rankings for Child Well-Being

2017 KIDS COUNT[®] Data Book shows that S.D. children continue to face obstacles in all key measures of child well-being

VERMILLION, S.D., June 13, 2017 — The latest comprehensive national review of child well-being shows South Dakota's young children still struggling with poverty and low levels of academic proficiency in reading and math, leaving the state with just a fair ranking compared to others.

The 2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ranks South Dakota 21st among all states in overall child well-being. The *Data Book* uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four categories — health, education, economic well-being, and family and community — that represent what children need most to thrive. The report examines progress over a five-year period.

On the economic front, between 2010 and 2015, South Dakota did fairly well, showing some slight declines in the percentages of disconnected teens — not working nor in school — and children living in families spending a third or more of their salaries on housing. However, the state saw a 4 percent rise in children living in families where parents lack full-time, year-round employment.

The percentages of South Dakota children living in poverty, children living in high-poverty neighborhoods, and those living in a household where the head of household lacks a high school diploma showed little changes between 2010 and 2015.

There was a bright spot with child health: a 13 percent drop in children lacking health insurance. Now, 93 percent of South Dakota children have health insurance.

“We can use this annual assessment to address the challenges children and families face in the state,” said Carole Cochran, project director for South Dakota KIDS COUNT. “One way we can make a difference for children in South Dakota is to expand access to high-quality Pre-K and early childhood services so that all children are prepared to succeed in school.”

According to this year's *Data Book*, South Dakota ranks:

- **10th in economic well-being**
 - Strengths: In 2015, South Dakota had the second lowest percentage of children (21 percent) in households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.
 - Challenges and opportunities: The percentage of children (18 percent) in poverty did not change between 2010 and 2015.
- **24th in family and community domain**
 - Strengths: The teen birth rate declined from 35 per 1,000 in 2010 to 26 per 1,000 in 2015.

- Challenges and opportunities: The percentage of children in single-parent families was 32 percent in 2015, up from 29 percent in 2010.
- **32nd in education**
 - Strengths: The percentage of fourth graders scoring below proficient in reading has decreased 3 percent between 2009 and 2015.
 - Challenges and opportunities: The percentage of eighth graders scoring below proficient in math increased 14 percent between 2009 and 2015, the steepest rise in the nation.
 - Note: The data source for high school students not graduating on time has changed and therefore the overall 2017 education rankings should not be compared to prior year rankings.
- **33rd in health**
 - Strengths: In 2015, South Dakota ranked second, with the lowest percentage of low-weight babies at 6.1 percent, which is 2 percent lower than the nation.
 - Challenges and opportunities: The rate of child and teen deaths increased by 5 percent from 2010 to 2015.

The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* shows that data-driven investments are key for promising futures and the Casey Foundation urges lawmakers to use this information in making decisions to benefit children.

“We must use reliable data to inform policy decisions that ease poverty and create the next generation of healthier and better-educated citizens,” said Casey Foundation President and CEO Patrick McCarthy. “We call on policymakers to use this evidence to continue and expand what’s working, and to find additional solutions that make a measurable difference for children.”

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 THE BEACOM SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

USD's [Beacom School of Business](#) was established in 1927 and has been accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) since 1949. The leading business school in the region, Beacom's programs are consistently ranked among the top business schools in the nation by Princeton Review, U.S. News & World Report and others for its high-quality learning experience, student success, affordability, and high-caliber of faculty and students. Whether a student chooses face-to-face or online courses, Beacom's programs emphasize real-world experience through professional organizations, quality internships and capstone projects.

ABOUT USD

Founded in 1862 and the first university in the Dakotas, the University of South Dakota is the only public liberal arts university in the state, with [205 undergraduate and 73 graduate programs](#) in the College of Arts & Sciences, School of Education, School of Law, Sanford School of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, Beacom School of Business and College of Fine Arts. With an enrollment of nearly 10,000 students and more than 400 faculty, USD has a 17:1 student/faculty ratio, and it [ranks among the best](#) in academics and affordability. USD's [17 athletic programs](#) compete at the NCAA Division I level.

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.