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Indiana Ranks 28th in Nation for Child Well-being

INDIANAPOLIS — The national *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ranks Indiana 28th in the nation for child well-being. Compared to neighboring states, Indiana ranks behind Illinois (22nd), Ohio (25th), and ahead of Michigan (33rd) and Kentucky (37th.)

Economically, nearly 20 percent of Indiana children are living in poverty, ranking the state 31st in the nation for child poverty — Indiana’s lowest ranking for this indicator since 2010. Indiana’s child poverty rate for all children is slightly higher than the national average but significantly higher for black and Hispanic children. Black Hoosier children are three times more likely to live in poverty than their white peers. While the state’s child poverty rate has improved slightly over the past three years, Indiana has still fallen in national rankings over the same period, due to gains made by other states. Additionally, Indiana is ranked 27th for the percentage of children living in families without secure parental employment, with 15.4 percent of children living in working-poor households.

Children living in poverty are at a greater risk for adverse experiences and experiencing threats to their well-being. “Child poverty impacts outcomes in all areas of children’s lives — from physical and mental health to academic achievement. Continued work is needed to ensure all of our state’s children, especially children of color, have an equitable chance at brighter futures.” says Tami Silverman, president and CEO of the Indiana Youth Institute.

The annual *Data Book* measures child well-being with 16 indicators in four domains — family and community, economics, education and health. These domains represent what children need most to thrive. In addition to its economic ranking (24th), Indiana ranks 32nd in the family and community domain, 31st in health and 14th in education.

Despite economic challenges, the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* reveals some areas of success for Hoosier children. Indiana’s highest ranking is in education — placing 14th in the nation and second behind Illinois compared to neighboring states. Indiana improved two places from last year’s ranking for fourth-grade reading proficiency, ranking seventh in the nation — however, only 41 percent of students are proficient.

“Continued investment in our children’s well-being is critical. We can have sustainable, positive impact when leaders and communities come together to consider this data and use it to create solutions for our youth and their families,” says Silverman.

As the nation approaches the decennial census, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and its partner organizations are sending the message that all children need to be counted, especially those under age 5 and within vulnerable populations. Experts from the Annie E. Casey Foundation are concerned that changes to the census, including a move to the first-ever digital survey and questions specific to citizenship, could increase the number of children who are undercounted.

Nationally, an estimated 4.5 million young children live in neighborhoods where there is a high risk of missing them in the 2020 census. According to the Population Research and Policy Review, Indiana ranked 15th nationally for undercounting children in 2010. About 9 percent of Indiana children under the age of 5 live in hard-to-count census tracts, and it is estimated that the 2010 Census undercounted about 2.4 percent of Hoosier children. Accurate census counts position Indiana to receive needed resources for its children’s well-being. Nearly \$3 billion of federal funds are allocated in Indiana based on census-derived data to programs that positively impact children such as Medicaid, SNAP, the National School Lunch Program, Head Start and foster care.

“The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* elevates the importance of using data to make decisions on behalf of child well-being. We all see benefits in our communities when children are accurately counted and have access to high-quality programs,” Silverman says.

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Release Information

The 2018 *KIDS COUNT*[®] *Data Book* will be available June 27 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. IYI can be contacted for interviews at media@iyi.org or 317-396-2737.

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.