



# children's defense fund minnesota

**UNDER EMBARGO Until Monday, June 17 at 12:01 a.m. ET**

Contact: Jennifer Bertram, [jbertram@childrensdefense.org](mailto:jbertram@childrensdefense.org), 612-600-5115

## Minnesota Ranks Fourth Overall for Children's Well-Being, but Children of Color and American Indian Children Experience Vast Disparities in Outcomes

### ***30th KIDS COUNT® Data Book provides the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States***

**SAINT PAUL, Minnesota** — Minnesota ranked fourth among states for overall child well-being, improving in economic well-being and education rankings from 2018, according to the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* — the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States — notes measurable progress since the first *Data Book*, which was published in 1990. Nevertheless, more than 13 million U.S. children live in poverty and serious racial and ethnic disparities persist.

“While Minnesota has consistently ranked toward the top compared to other states, when we disaggregate the data by race and ethnicity, we find our state has some of the most pronounced disparities in outcomes for the children,” said Bharti Wahí, executive director of Children’s Defense Fund-Minnesota (CDF-MN). “In order build a strong state and build for a strong future, we must address these disparities as our state continues to grow in racial and ethnic diversity.”

In the 2019 legislative session, CDF-MN advocated for policies that would reflect a stronger investment in the needs of every child and family in our state, and the legislature did pass several of these measures including:

- Family-friendly improvements to comply with federal regulations for the Child Care Assistance Program;
- \$4 million over four years to create the Community Solutions Grant Program to invest in strategies to more meaningfully support and leverage the strengths and assets of children of color and American Indian children from prenatal to age eight;
- \$100 increase to the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) cash grant;
- Expansion of the Working Family Tax Credit; and

- \$1.6 million for outreach to undercounted communities, including young children, for the 2020 census.

CDF-MN plans to build upon these successes in future legislative sessions to ensure the state’s budget puts children and families first. “We want to send a strong message to communities that we support children and families through critical investments, and the benefits of these investments far outweigh the costs to ensure that every child in Minnesota has a fair and equitable start in life,” said Wahi.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* shows how essential accurate data are to sound policymaking. Minnesota is at risk of losing one of its congressional seats based on the 2020 census count. While Minnesota has historically had a strong response to the census, second only to Wisconsin, people of color and American Indian people have historically responded to the census at lower rates than whites. The 2010 census missed 2.2 million children nationally, and the upcoming count may miss even more if young children are not a priority. The stakes are high: 55 major federal programs, including Head Start and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, allocate more than \$880 billion each year based on census data, with Minnesota receiving nearly \$15.5 billion of that.

The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* from the Annie E. Casey Foundation uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains — health, education, economic well-being and family and community — as an assessment of child well-being. Minnesota ranks:

- Third in economic well-being. Minnesota’s families have experienced significant progress in economic security, with a 20 percent decrease in the percentage of children living in poverty compared to 2010. Work support programs such as SNAP and Medical Assistance help working families living in poverty meet basic needs, and those programs continue to provide critical support to the 12 percent of children living in poverty in Minnesota.
- 10th in education. Only 46 percent of children ages three and four attend preschool despite widespread research pointing to the positive impact that high-quality early childhood education has on long-term educational outcomes. Increased state investment in recent years has improved access, but we must do more to address shortages in high-quality early childhood education opportunities and the affordability of these programs.
- Sixth in the family and community domain. Teen birth rates are at an all-time low nationwide, and Minnesota is seeing its lowest rate (12 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19) since 2010.
- Sixth in health. Minnesota’s rates are among the highest in the nation with regard to the percentage of children who are covered by health insurance, though sharp disparities exist for Latino and American Indian children. More investments in programs are needed to reach the 47,000 children statewide who remain uninsured, many of whom are actually eligible for a Minnesota Health Care Program such as Medical Assistance.

“America’s children are one-quarter of our population and 100 percent of our future,” said Casey Foundation President and CEO Lisa Hamilton. “All of the 74 million kids in our increasingly diverse country have unlimited potential, and we have the data, knowledge and evidence to create the policies that will help them realize it. It’s incumbent on us to do just that.”

The Casey Foundation points to areas of tremendous improvement in children’s lives nationally — including access to health care, decreased rates of teen childbearing and increased rates of high school graduation — and draws a direct line to policies that support this success. Especially as the child

population is expanding, there are steps that policymakers should take to help all children thrive. The Casey Foundation calls on elected officials and representatives to:

- *Expand the programs that make and keep kids healthy.* For the sake of all children, regardless of their immigration status, states should expand access to Medicaid.
- *Provide the tools proven to help families lift themselves up economically.* Federal and state earned income tax credits (EITC) and child tax credit programs mean working parents can use more of their take-home pay to meet their children's needs.
- *Address ethnic and racial inequities.* The national averages of child well-being can mask the reality that black and brown children still face a greater number of obstacles.
- *Count all kids.* Ensure the 2020 census counts all children, especially those under five years old and from hard-to-count areas.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the 30th edition of an annual data study that is based on U.S. Census and other publicly available data, representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

### **Release Information**

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available June 17 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). 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).

### **About Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota**

Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota releases an annual state KIDS COUNT Data Book each fall. Download the [2018 Minnesota KIDS COUNT Data Book here](#). The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

### **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).

###