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North Dakota Child Population Drops by 28,000, then Rebounds by 33,000 in Half the Time
30th KIDS COUNT® Data Book Finds that 175,772 children will shape the future of more diverse state

FARGO — Today's release of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* reveals that North Dakota's child population is continuing to grow and become more diverse. Since the first Data Book was published in 1990, measurable progress has been made to help children thrive — but disparities persist.

In 1990, North Dakota was home to 170,920 children. Due largely to out-migration, this number steadily decreased to a low of 143,000 by 2008. As North Dakota's economy shifted and energy development drew more people to the state, total births began to increase and the child population began to grow an average of 2 percent annually, reaching 175,772 children by 2017. As North Dakota's child population grew, it also became more diverse. Combined, American Indian, African-American, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino youth comprised 9 percent of all North Dakota children in 1990. By 2017, the number of non-white and Hispanic youth more than doubled to 21 percent.

"Despite recent, dramatic changes in our state's child population, good policy decisions have resulted in fewer teen births and higher graduation rates," said North Dakota KIDS COUNT Director Karen Olson. "And we can do more. All of the nearly 176,000 children in our increasingly diverse state have the potential for brighter futures, and we have the data, knowledge and evidence for what it takes to make that vision a reality."

North Dakota ranks 11th in the nation for overall child well-being. Although North Dakota ranks well in economic and family and community indicators, several challenges exist with respect to education and health that could limit the ability of children to reach their full potential.

The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains — economic well-being, family and community, education and health — that represent what children need most to thrive. In the *2019 Data Book*, North Dakota ranks:

- **First in economic well-being.** North Dakota continues to lead the nation in the economic well-being of children. Among states, North Dakota has the lowest percentage of children in families with a high housing cost burden (18 percent); the lowest percentage of teens not attending school and not working (4 percent); the second-lowest child poverty rate (11 percent); and the sixth-lowest percentage of children without secure parental employment (22 percent).
- **Fourth in the family and community domain.** When compared with other states, children in North Dakota fare well in terms of family and community indicators. Five percent of North Dakota children live in families where the head of household lacks a high school diploma and 27 percent of children live in a single-parent family. The national averages are 13 percent and 34 percent, respectively. Since 2010, North Dakota saw faster rates of declines in the teen birth rate and in the percentage of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods than at the national level.
- **35th in education.** Despite a minor improvement in the on-time high school graduation rate from 2016 to 2017, two-thirds of fourth-graders are not proficient in reading, 60 percent of

eighth-graders are not proficient in math and 69 percent of North Dakota three- and four-year-olds are not enrolled in prekindergarten programs.

- **30th in health.** From 2010 to 2017, the child and teen death rate decreased from 34 per 100,000 to 30 per 100,000 in North Dakota and there was no change in the percentage of babies born with a low birth weight. However, the uninsured rate for children in North Dakota has risen to 8 percent since 2010 and remains nearly twice the national average. About 4 percent of teens reported abusing alcohol or drugs in the past year, both in the state and at the national level.

“A growing child population is good for North Dakota if we invest in them now – educate them and enable them to contribute to our economy – become a strong, highly educated workforce that will support our growing elderly population, our aging baby boomers,” said Olson. “Trends are shaped by many forces, but these data provide us an opportunity to better understand the challenges facing children and families in our state and to strategically invest in their futures.”

Elected officials and representatives are called on to:

- *Expand the programs that make and keep kids healthy.* Nearly half of uninsured children in North Dakota live in low-income families — with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level — making them potentially eligible for coverage through Medicaid and Healthy Steps (i.e., Children’s Health Insurance Program or CHIP).
- *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 devote more resources to meeting their children’s needs.
- *Embrace strengths and what is working for all children.* Every child has incredible individual potential, and communities thrive when all kids thrive. Native American, African-American, Asian, and Latino children all saw gains during the reporting period. Our public policies must acknowledge and strengthen promising efforts – and at the same time address ethnic and racial inequities.
- *Count all kids.* Ensure the 2020 census counts all children, including those under 5 years old and from hard-to-count areas. In North Dakota, approximately 4,000 young children live in these hard-to-count areas. When children aren’t counted, state and local infrastructures face losing millions of federal dollars for supports. Census-derived data are used to distribute more than \$1.45 billion a year to North Dakota, including \$331 million directly to children for programs covering health (Medicaid, Healthy Steps), education (Title I, Head Start, Special Education), food security (SNAP, School Lunch, and WIC), foster care and child care.

Release Information

The 2019 *KIDS COUNT*® *Data Book* will be available June 17 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at 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.

About North Dakota KIDS COUNT

The North Dakota *KIDS COUNT*® program provides the information necessary to inform discussions and decisions to improve the health and well-being of children in North Dakota. For more information, visit <https://www.ndkidscount.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.