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UNDER EMBARGO Until Monday, June 21, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. ET

Contact: Margaret Duxbury
Indiana Youth Institute
(317)396-2733
mduxbury@iyi.org

KIDS COUNT Data Book® Ranks Indiana 29th , Provides Comprehensive Annual Report on Child Well-Being Amongst COVID-19 Crisis in the United States

Indianapolis, IN — Indiana ranks 29th in the nation for child well-being, according to the **2021 KIDS COUNT® national Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent household data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how families have fared between the Great Recession and the COVID-19 crisis. While the *Data Book* identifies many positive gains, more progress must be made to ensure all children thrive.

This year's *National Data Book* shows nearly a decade of progress could be erased by the COVID-19 **pandemic** unless policymakers act boldly to sustain the beginnings of a recovery from the coronavirus crisis.

The *National Data Book* shows simply returning to a pre-pandemic level of support for children and families would shortchange millions of kids and fail to address persistent racial and ethnic disparities.

"The past year has offered painful reminders of the history and ongoing effects of institutional racism in America," said Dr. Tami Silverman, President and CEO of Indiana Youth Institute, Indiana's member of the KIDS COUNT ® network. "We believe better understanding the realities facing our children of color empowers us to work together to build equitable solutions."

Sixteen indicators measuring four domains – economic well-being, education, health, and family and community context – are used by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in each year's *Data Book* to assess child well-being. The annual KIDS COUNT ® data and rankings represent the most recent information available but do not capture the impact of the past year:

- **ECONOMIC WELL-BEING:** In 2020, Indiana's ranking in economic well-being decreased 3 spots from last year, currently ranking 18th in the nation. The percentage of Hoosier children in poverty decreased, currently at 15.2%. The percentage of teens ages 16 to 19 not attending school and not working increased by one percentage to 7%, meanwhile, Indiana's ranking fell 11 spots to 26th. Additionally, while COVID has not hit Indiana as hardy as other states economically, we know the pandemic has exacerbated all of these economic indicators and increased financial hardships for many Hoosier families.

- **EDUCATION:** In 2020, Indiana's ranking in education was 17th in the nation, down 2 spots from last year. Our lowest ranking data indicator continues to be the number of young children ages 3 and 4 enrolled in pre-school, currently ranking 40th in the nation.
- **HEALTH:** In 2020, Indiana's ranking in health was 36th in the nation, a slight decrease from our previous years ranking of 35th. Our child and teen death rate improved by 3 percentage points from 32% in 2018 to 29% in 2019. At the same time, the percentage of babies born with low-birthweight held roughly steady at 8.2%, but Indiana's ranking decreased 1 spot to 24th in the nation.
- **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT:** The same as last year, Indiana's 2020 ranking in Family and Community remained 31st in the nation. Between 2014-18 and 2015-19 the rate of children in Indiana living in high poverty areas decreased from 10% to 8%. In 2015-19 127,000 children lived in high poverty areas. Indiana's ranking improved from 30th to ranked 25th in the country for this indicator. However, Indiana's percentage of children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma stayed the same at 11%, though Indiana's ranking decreased one spot to 32nd.

Data from the Household Pulse Survey, add to the story of Indiana's children and families in this moment and suggests that Indiana is not yet experiencing the beginnings of a recovery that are being seen in other parts of the country.

- During the pandemic, in 2020, 9% adults in Indiana with children in the household lacked health insurance. However, by March 2021, this figure has increased to 13%, which is two percentage points higher than the national average.
- In 2020, 41% of households with someone planning to enroll in postsecondary education changed their plan. This increased by March 2021 to 42%. Although slight, Indiana is one of four states to see an increase.
- 24% of adults with children in the household experienced depression during 2020. This percentage remained static through March 2021.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most extraordinary crisis to hit families in decades," said Lisa Hamilton, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. "Deliberate policy decisions can rescue families, and we're already seeing the beginnings of that. Policymakers can use this moment to repair both the damage wrought by both the pandemic and longstanding inequities."

Investing in children, families and communities is a priority to ensure an equitable and expansive recovery. Several of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's suggestions have already been enacted in the American Rescue Plan, and additional recommendations include:

- **Congress should make the expansion of the child tax credit permanent.** The child tax credit has long had bipartisan support, so lawmakers should find common cause and ensure the largest one-year drop ever in child poverty is not followed by a surge.

- **State and local governments should prioritize the recovery of hard-hit communities of color.**
- **States should expand income support that helps families care for their children.** Permanently extending unemployment insurance eligibility to contract, gig and other workers and expanding state tax credits would benefit parents and children.
- **States that have not done so should expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.** The American Rescue Plan offers incentives to do so.
- **States should strengthen public schools and pathways to postsecondary education and training.**

Release Information

The 2021 KIDS COUNT® Data Book will be available June 21 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.

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About the Indiana Youth Institute

For three decades, the Indiana Youth Institute has supported the youth services field through innovative trainings, critical data, and capacity-building resources, aiming every effort at increasing the well-being of all children. To learn more about the Indiana Youth Institute, visit www.iyi.org, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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.