



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

CONTACT: Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner | tiffany.tyler-garner@caanv.org | 702-228-1869
Dr. Tara C. Raines | tara.raines@caanv.org | 702-228-1869

Nevada Progress on Child and Family Well-Being Imperiled by Pandemic

Data Across 50 States Show Struggles with Poverty and Access to Healthcare but Hopes for Recovery Remain, Annie E. Casey Foundation Finds

LAS VEGAS — Historically, Nevada has struggled to meet the needs of our children and families. Before being stricken by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing crisis, Nevadans were actually making gains, closing the gap in a number of areas and reducing disparities in childhood. However, the pandemic halted or reversed this progress. During the pandemic, Nevadans fared worse than the national average for households with children experiencing housing instability, food insecurity, limited access to health care and families experiencing pervasive sadness.

The pre-pandemic gains are clear in the **2021 KIDS COUNT® 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. By including data from both before and during the pandemic, this year's *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.

In some indicators, Nevada showed tremendous improvement from 2010 to 2019. For example, Nevada saw a major decline in teen pregnancy, from 39% (2010) to 19% in 2019 and the number of teens not working and not in school reduced by 40%. The percentage of young children in school, the number of fourth graders demonstrating reading proficiency, and the percentage of eighth graders demonstrating math proficiency have all increased. Before the pandemic, Nevada was moving in the right direction.

“We were well on our way to moving the needle for children and families in Nevada. We need to address the fractures highlighted by the pandemic so we can get back on track improving the lives of our kids, we need to do more!” said Dr. Tara Raines, director of KidsCount Initiatives of Children’s Advocacy Alliance, Nevada’s member of the KIDS COUNT network. The *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.

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 2019, **17%** of Nevadan children lived in households with an income below the poverty line.
- **EDUCATION:** In 2017-19, **62%** of young Nevadan children were not in school.
- **AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE:** In 2019, **8%** of Nevadan children did not have health insurance.
- **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT:** In 2015-19, **8%** of Nevadan children lived in high poverty areas.

Survey data from the last year add to the story of Nevada's children and families in this moment:

- During the pandemic, in 2020 14% of adults in Nevada with children in the household lacked health insurance. However, by March 2021, this figure had fallen to 13%, suggesting the slightest beginnings of a recovery. It is noteworthy that the national average fell by a greater margin, indicating Nevada’s recovery is moving more slowly than other parts of the country.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is 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 help them recover, and we’re already seeing the beginnings of that. Policymakers should use this moment to repair the damage the pandemic has caused — and to address long-standing inequities it has exacerbated.”

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.

About the Children's Advocacy Alliance

The Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA) is a community-based nonprofit organization that advocates for policy changes that benefit Nevada's children and families by researching and utilizing current data and promoting evidence-based policies to ensure that every child has a chance to thrive. CAA engages the community by bringing people together to address challenges and opportunities around children's issues to leverage collective strength toward improving the systems that support the well-being of Nevada's children. For more information, visit www.caanv.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.

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