

UNDER EMBARGO
until August 8, 2022 at 12:01 a.m. ET

Media Release
Contact: Ashley Haynes
Indiana Youth Institute
(317) 396-2737
ahaynes@iyi.org

Indiana Child Well-Being Rank 28th in Nation, Hoosier Children Still Suffering from Mental Health Pandemic

Data across 50 states show 7.3 million kids with anxiety or depression, as effects of coronavirus crisis linger, Annie E. Casey Foundation finds

INDIANAPOLIS, IN — Indiana's child well-being rank is 28th in the country, according to the **2022 KIDS COUNT® Data Book**, an annual 50-state report of recent household data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how children and families are faring. Indiana has the second highest ranking among neighboring states (Illinois ranked 23rd in overall child well-being, Ohio 31st, Michigan 32nd, and Kentucky 37th).

However, children in America are in a mental health crisis, struggling with anxiety and depression at unprecedented levels. The annual report focuses this year on youth mental health, concurring with a recent assessment by the U.S. surgeon general that conditions amount to a youth mental health pandemic. The report sheds light on the health, economic and other challenges affecting American children.

"The **KIDS COUNT® Data Book** provides valuable insight into where progress is being made and where we need to focus our efforts," said Tami Silverman, president, and CEO of Indiana Youth Institute (IYI), Indiana's member of the **KIDS COUNT®** network. "Indiana's improvement in ensuring child well-being is a result of the hard work and dedication of thousands of caring adults and youth-serving organizations across the state. While there are positive signs across many indicators, we need to do more to ensure Hoosier children, especially our children of color, have bright futures."

Each year, the *Data Book* presents national and state data from 16 indicators across four domains — economic well-being, education, health, and family and community factors — and ranks the states according to how children are faring overall. The data in this year's report are a mix of pre-pandemic and more recent figures and are the latest available. Indiana ranks:

- **19th in Economic Well-Being:** In addition to a lower poverty rate for children between 2016-20 compared to 2008-12, the report found a 27% drop in the number of children living in households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing. More good news: The percentage of children whose parents lack secure employment dropped to 27% in 2016-20 from 31% in 2008-12.
- **17th in Education:** All four Education indicators improved. The percentage of fourth graders who are proficient in reading increased to 37% in 2019 from 34% in 2009.
- **31st in Family & Community:** Indiana's teen birth rate continues to decrease — 19 teen births per 1,000 births in 2020 compared to 37 per 1,000 births in 2010 — but it is still above the national rate of 15 teen births per 1,000 births.
- **31st in Health:** Hoosier kids are trending worse on three out of four health indicators. 6% of Hoosier children don't have health insurance, an improvement from 9% in 2008-12. However, that's still higher than the national average of 5%.

Focusing on mental health, the *Data Book* reports that children across America, in more than 40 states and the District of Columbia, were more likely to encounter anxiety or depression during the first year of the COVID-19 crisis than previously. In Indiana, the percentage of children ages 3-17 experiencing anxiety or depression increased from 11.7% to 15.9% between 2016 and 2020, a 35.9% jump the year COVID-19 swept across the United States. Nationally, 26% more or 1.5 million more children are struggling to make it through the day because of anxiety or depression.

Racial and ethnic disparities contribute to disproportionately troubling mental health and wellness conditions among children of color. According to the most recent federal survey, 9% of high schoolers attempted suicide in 2019, the year before the pandemic hitting. The rates were higher among Black students (12%), students who identified with two or more races (13%), and American Indian and Native Alaskan (over 25%) students. Further, many LGBTQ young people are encountering challenges as they seek mental health support. Among heterosexual high school students of all races and ethnicities, 6% attempted suicide; the share was 23% for gay, lesbian, or bisexual students.



UNDER EMBARGO
until August 8, 2022 at 12:01 a.m. ET

Media Release
Contact: Ashley Haynes
Indiana Youth Institute
(317) 396-2737
ahaynes@iyi.org

The Annie E. Casey Foundation calls for lawmakers to heed the surgeon general's warning and respond by developing programs and policies to ease mental health burdens on children and their families by:

- **Prioritize meeting kids' basic needs.** Youth who grow up in poverty are two to three times more likely to develop mental health conditions than their peers. Children need a solid foundation of nutritious food, stable housing, and safe neighborhoods — and their families need financial stability — to foster positive mental health and wellness.
- **Ensure every child has access to the mental health care they need, when and where they need it.** Schools should increase the presence of social workers, psychologists and other mental health professionals on staff and strive to meet the 250-to-1 ratio of students to counselors recommended by the American School Counselor Association, and they can work with local health care providers and local and state governments to make additional federal resources available and coordinate treatment.
- **Bolster mental health care that takes into account young people's experiences and identities.** It should be trauma-informed — designed to promote a child's healing and emotional security — and culturally relevant to the child's life. It should be informed by the latest evidence and research and should be geared toward early intervention, which can be especially important in the absence of a formal diagnosis of mental illness.

###

RELEASE INFORMATION

The *2022 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* will be available 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 <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.

About Indiana Youth Institute:

For over three decades, Indiana Youth Institute (IYI) 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 IYI, visit www.iyi.org, follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's young children, youth and young adults 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.