

2022 KIDS COUNT® DATA BOOK REPORTS CHILD WELL-BEING IMPROVES FOR NEW YORK CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Annie E. Casey Foundation calls out need for mental health resources nationwide

ALBANY — The New York State Council on Children and Families (Council) announced that the *2022 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation ranks New York 29th overall in child well-being among other states, 13th in the nation in children’s health and 15th in education. Rankings are based on 16 measures in the areas of health, education, economic security, family and community.

The Council, working with the state’s child-serving state agencies, helps develop comprehensive and coordinated systems of care to support the wide-ranging needs of New York’s children and families.

“We at the Council on Children and Families recognize that mental health is crucial to supporting the resilience of children and families, especially during this unprecedented time and for children and youth who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19,” **said Elana Marton, the Council’s acting executive director.** “Children and families experiencing multiple hardships and living in communities of color, immigrant and low-income neighborhoods are particularly affected.”

The [NYS KIDS COUNT Multimedia Data Book 2020](#) highlighted indicators of social and emotional well-being and mental health resources for children and adults in each county. The [2020 Data Book and Map](#) was compiled during the pandemic when many New Yorkers were experiencing heightened feelings of isolation, anxiety and stress.

“New York is taking important and innovative actions to improve upon the health and safety of children and to help them realize their full potential,” **said New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Sheila J. Poole.** “We, along with the Council and sister agencies, are working together with unprecedented coordination to expand the range of primary prevention and supportive services to make sure children and families receive help and assistance. Our children, families and communities are facing extraordinary challenges and stress, and the long-term health impacts of exposure to chronic stress are well known. This is a time of great urgency for investment and the mobilization of resources for New York’s future generations.”

More than two years have passed since the pandemic caused significant worldwide disruption, underscoring system inequities and health disparities and further stressing systems that were already facing operational and funding issues. Families and youth experienced trauma, fatigue, isolation and grief as fears surrounding the virus, and loss of colleagues and loved ones, and an unpredictable future permeated everyday life.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation highlights the mental health of our children. “Mental health is just as important as physical health in a child’s ability to thrive,” said Lisa Hamilton, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “As our nation continues to navigate the fallout from the COVID crisis, policymakers must do more to ensure all kids have access to the care and support they need to cope and live full lives.”

Under Governor Kathy Hochul’s leadership, New York is taking the following common sense policy steps to ensure the well-being of New York’s children and families.

Prioritize meeting kids’ basic needs. 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. To help ensure the needs of children and families are met, New York has implemented and invested in:

- A “warm” line – [OCFS HEARS Family Line \(Help, Empower, Reassure and Support\)](#) – to guide parents and families to services including food, clothing, housing, medical and behavioral health care services and parenting education.
- The state child tax credit and earned income tax credit to help working families meet rising costs and recover from pandemic setbacks.
- The [ConnectALL initiative](#) — the largest-ever investment in New York's 21st century infrastructure to deliver affordable internet access to millions of residents, bolster digital equity and transform the state's digital infrastructure.
- Outreach about the innovations to the WIC program and efforts to decrease stigma and bureaucracy involved for eligible families.
- Creation of [Family Opportunity Centers](#), which are community-based or school-based programs that provide services that strengthen families and improve the safety and well-being of children and families.
- Support for New York's farms, regional food banks and local food providers to deliver healthy food to New York families in need. New investments will bring the total funding commitment for the [Nourish NY](#) program to \$60 million.
- The Governor's Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council, committed to halving child poverty over the next decade.

Ensure all children have access to the mental health care they need, when and where they need it. “New York State is a national leader in supporting the mental health of children and families from prevention through intensive supports and services,” said the **state Office of Mental Health Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan**. “In the wake of the pandemic and its effects on youth mental health, New York State has made historic investments into prevention and mental health services supporting children and families. We have expanded HealthySteps program to support young children and families and invested in Project TEACH to make mental health resources available to families through their pediatricians.”

OMH has licensed more than 1,000 school-based mental health clinics across the state and funded youth mental health first aid statewide to help trusted adults identify school-age youth and young adults who need mental health supports. New York has become the first state in the nation to roll out a Youth ACT program and is doubling the capacity of the home-based crisis intervention program.

New York has continued to be ranked at the top of states in covering children and youth with insurance, with 97% of youth covered regardless of parents' immigrant status, and has responded to the unprecedented mental health needs with many innovative initiatives and investments including but not limited to:

- NY Project Hope, <https://nyprojecthope.org/>.
- \$100 million in [mental health grants](#) for school districts and BOCES.
- Implementation of the 988 Crisis Hotline for suicide prevention.
- Integrating behavioral health services into pediatric primary care visits through the Healthy Steps program, investing an additional \$7.5 million in residential treatment facilities for children, and continuing expansion of other children's community mental health services.
- Increased funding for Healthy Families New York for a total of \$41.5 million and for the Nurse-Family Partnership to \$4.2 million, and allocating \$200,000 to Parent Child Plus, Inc. The NYS Parent Portal, <https://www.nysparenting.org>, has a parent support tool to find programs in areas of the state.
- Training early childhood professionals on adverse childhood experiences and how to screen and refer children to necessary services.
- Establishing 24/7/365 Crisis Stabilization Centers that are expected, on average, to support more than 100,000 individuals per year.
- Prioritizing [early childhood social and emotional growth and development](#)
- Promoting New York's immigrant-friendly history with No Room for Hate media campaign.

- Assisting children with complex needs and their families in crisis through the Council on Children and Families' [Interagency Resolution Unit](#).
- Strengthening services for LGBTQ+ youth and data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) to better meet the needs of the LGBTQ+ and non-binary youth.
- Empowering future leaders by building confidence and nurturing aspirations by connecting young Latinas to internships and other opportunities through the state's [Latina Mentoring Initiative](#).

Information

The 2022 KIDS COUNT Data Book is available August 8, 2022, at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org/databook, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. 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.

The Council on Children and Families

The Council on Children and Families coordinates the state health, education and human services systems to provide more effective systems of care for children and families. Follow the Council on Twitter @nysccf and bookmark our website, <http://www.ccf.ny.gov>.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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