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Indiana Ranks 24th in Child Well-Being, but Inaccessible, Unaffordable Childcare Remains a Burden on Families

50-State Data Show Economy Loses \$122 Billion a Year as Child Care Challenges Cause Parents to Miss, Quit or Scale Back Work, Annie E. Casey Foundation Finds

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA — Indiana ranks 24th in child well-being, according to the **2023 KIDS COUNT® Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent household data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how children and families are faring. However, our country's lack of affordable and accessible child care short-changes children and causes parents in Indiana to frequently miss work or even quit their jobs, while those who can find care are paying dearly for it. These child care challenges cost the American economy billions of dollars a year. Although last year's and this year's rankings cannot be directly compared due to data shifts, an **overall child well-being rank of 24th compared to other states is Indiana's highest ranking in 10 years.**

"The past couple of years have challenged all of us, but particularly our kids, families, and youth workers. The differences in the data emerging after 2020 reflects that," said **Tami Silverman, president & CEO of Indiana Youth Institute**, Indiana's member of the KIDS COUNT network. "But opportunities for progress that support Indiana's youth have still emerged. Now is the time to expand and explore that progress. Our work and the work of the thousands of youth workers, educators, parents, and caregivers is not finished until all children are safe, well-educated, healthy and supported."

The *Data Book* reports too many parents cannot secure childcare that is compatible with work schedules and commutes. According to the *Data Book*, in 2020–21, 9% of children birth to age 5 in Indiana lived in families in which someone quit, changed, or refused a job because of problems with childcare. And women are five to eight times more likely than men to experience negative employment consequences related to caregiving.

Even if parents can find an opening at childcare near their home, they often can't pay for it. Indiana is one of 33 states where infant care is more expensive than in-state tuition at public colleges. Indiana's average cost of center-based childcare for a toddler was \$7,884, 7.9% of median income for a married couple and 25.8% of a single mother's income in the state.

While the cost of care burdens families, childcare workers are paid worse than 98% of professions. Median national pay for child care workers was \$28,520 per year or \$13.71 an hour in 2022, less than the wage for retail (\$14.26) and customer service (\$18.16) workers.

The shortcomings of the childcare market also affect the current and future health of the American economy, costing \$122 billion a year in lost earnings, productivity and tax revenue, according to one study. These challenges put parents under tremendous stress to meet the dual responsibilities of providing for their families and ensuring their children are safe and nurtured.

"A good child care system is essential for kids to thrive and our economy to prosper. But our current approach fails kids, parents, and child care workers by every measure," said **Lisa Hamilton, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation**. "Without safe child care they can afford and get to, working parents face impossible choices, affecting not only their families, but their employers as well."

Each year, the *Data Book* presents national and state data from 16 indicators in four domains — Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, and Family and Community factors — and ranks the states according to how children are faring overall. This year, compared to other states in the county Indiana ranks:

- 24th in Overall Child Well-Being
- 31st in Family and Community
- 29th in Health
- 16th in Economic Well-Being
- 13th in Education

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RELEASE INFORMATION

The 2023 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 datacenter.aecf.org.

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 young people 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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