



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alaska's Children & Families Face Persistent Struggles

Anchorage, Alaska – Alaska ranks **40th in overall child well-being**, according to the 2025 KIDS COUNT® Data Book from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This annual 50-state report shows Alaska continues to face serious challenges in economic stability and access to essential supports for children and families.

Year after year, the Alaska Legislature struggles to adequately fund essential child and family services, consistently leaving critical programs under-resourced. As a result, school districts are being forced to cut programs, close schools, increase class sizes, and confront worsening challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers, all while educational outcomes continue to decline. In May, Alaska's only crisis recovery center for youth closed its doors, despite the state having one of the highest youth suicide rates in the nation. According to the Alaska Children's Budget, the state has reduced its investment in children and families by 15% compared to the average funding levels from FY2014–2017.

“These numbers highlight a broader challenge - allocating existing resources without fully addressing how to sustainably fund the supports children, youth, and families need to thrive”, said **Trevor Storrs**, President & CEO of Alaska Children's Trust. “Reliable and sufficient state revenue is essential to breaking the cycle of inconsistent investments that lead to poor outcomes for children, youth, and families. Without a stable fiscal foundation, programs and services that support long-term well-being remain vulnerable to cuts and short-term fixes, perpetuating challenges rather than solving them.”



The KIDS COUNT Data Book measures child well-being across four key domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family & community. Alaska's overall ranking of **40th** places the state in the bottom fifth of states.

Key findings for Alaska reveal:

- 12% of children live in poverty
- 78% of fourth graders – nearly four out of every five kids – are not proficient in reading
- 7% of children lack health insurance
- 6% of children live in high-poverty neighborhoods

While some progress has been made – such as recent legislative wins expanding access to child care assistance and broadening SNAP eligibility — other critical policies like paid family leave and payday lending reforms have stalled.

“Alaska continues to face persistent challenges in ensuring the well-being of its children, youth, and families.” said **Jen Griffis**, Vice President of Policy & Advocacy at Alaska Children's Trust. “It's important now, more than ever, that Alaskans have a conversation about how we stop the steady erosion of services and make real, lasting investments in Alaska's future.”

Alaska Children's Trust Policy Priorities:

- **Economic Well-Being:** Expand access to affordable child care, implement paid family medical leave, eliminate predatory lending, and implement multi-year Medicaid eligibility for children.
- **Education:** Permanently increase per-student funding, support universal school meals, ensure internet access, and address chronic absenteeism with positive interventions.
- **Mental Health:** Remove barriers to mental health services by allowing youth to self-consent for services at 16, and supporting schools that choose to include mental wellness in their health curriculum.
- **Out-of-School Time:** Stabilize funding for afterschool and summer programs, recognizing their role in academic support and youth mental health.



RELEASE INFORMATION

The *2025 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* will be available at www.alaskachildrenstrust.org/kids-count. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org. 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 or call the Alaska Children's Trust Director of Communications, Mirna Estrada , for assistance (907)917-8323 or mestrada@alaskachildrenstrust.org.

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.

ABOUT THE ALASKA CHILDREN'S TRUST

Alaska Children's Trust (ACT) is the statewide lead organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. For over thirty years, we have invested resources across Alaska to ensure children live in safe, stable, and nurturing environments. ACT is the Alaska chapter of the KIDS COUNT network. Learn more about [ACT here](#), explore the data (on June 9) [here](#).