



**UNDER EMBARGO until June 9, 2025, at 12:01 a.m. ET**

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**California Moves Up Three Spots, Yet Still Ranks Just 32<sup>nd</sup> Among All States for Kids' Well-Being**  
*Improvement Shows State Budget Must Build Off Last Year and Prioritize Kids*

**OAKLAND, CA** — California ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> among all states in child well-being, according to the **2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The new ranking improved three spots from 35<sup>th</sup> in the 2024 *Data Book*.

“While still ranking in the bottom half in child well-being is nothing to be proud of, the slight improvement from last year shows how refusing to cut from kids, and instead prioritizing them, can move California in the right direction,” said Ted Lempert, President of Children Now, California’s member of the KIDS COUNT network. “This report highlights why now, as is true in any financial or political climate, is not the time to cut from kids.”

While California’s ranking in kids’ education also improved slightly to 30<sup>th</sup> from 35<sup>th</sup>, student performance in math and reading continues to be at an abysmal level. A full 75% of 8th graders in California are not proficient in math, while 71% of 4th graders are not proficient in reading. Likely core reasons for these dismal numbers were highlighted in Children Now’s [2024 California Children’s Report Card](#), with the state ranking 49<sup>th</sup> in teacher-to-student ratio and just 43<sup>rd</sup> in the percent of GDP spent on TK-12 schools.

“California is failing to deliver high-quality education for its kids, and this can largely be attributed to our state budgets consistently sacrificing children in favor of other priorities,” said Lempert. “While steps in the right direction were taken in last year’s budget, much more is needed, and we cannot make real progress without kids’ education consistently being prioritized like it is in other states.”

A bright spot in the report was California remaining 3rd-best in the percentage of children without health insurance, where the state has improved dramatically after ranking just 35th in 2013. With ongoing threats to cut Medicaid at the federal level, however, California must remain vigilant to ensure kids and families stay covered and their health stays protected.

“Ensuring access to health insurance for all kids was one of California’s crowning policy achievements in the last decade,” said Lempert. “Despite the current turbulent environment, now more than ever we cannot go backwards and must protect the health of all our kids.”

Each year, the *KIDS COUNT® 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 states according to how children are faring. In its 36th year of publication, the *Data Book’s* reliable statewide numbers help leaders see where progress is being made, where greater support is needed, and which strategies are making a difference. This road map equips policymakers, advocates and communities with the information they need to make decisions that help kids and young people thrive.

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## **RELEASE INFORMATION**

The *2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book* is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://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](http://datacenter.aecf.org).

## **ABOUT CHILDREN NOW**

By employing a game-changing, whole-child (pre-natal to age 26), antiracist, connector model, [Children Now](#) harnesses collective power to achieve transformational and systemic results for California's kids, so that all children have the services and supports they need to reach their full potential. Children Now also coordinates [The Children's Movement of California](#), the most powerful and diverse advocacy network in the country, with over 5,600 organizations across the state that care about kids and help drive policy changes through collective action campaigns.

## **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](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.