



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

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The District of Columbia has improved on many measures of child and youth well-being, but threats to roll back essential programs endanger that progress

Preschool participation, health insurance coverage, and graduation rates are up while child poverty is down in the District, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation

WASHINGTON, DC (June 9, 2025)—The District of Columbia has made real progress in areas that affect child and youth well-being thanks to bold policy interventions. Reducing the percentage of children living below the federal poverty line and the percentage of children in families in which parents lack full-time, year-round employment; continuing to have among the highest percentages in the country of young children enrolled in preschool and children with health insurance; and increasing high school graduation rates are all points highlighted in the new **2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book**, a 50-state, plus the District of Columbia, report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Data Book analyzes how kids are faring in post-pandemic America. Having made progress in many ways, District leaders must ensure that the current budget tension does not result in undoing improved support for children and youth.

Much of the District's progress has occurred for children and youth across racial groups. For example, [high school graduation rates](#) improved between 2018-19 and 2021-22, not just for white students (from 93% to 96%) but also for Black students (from 69% to 76%) and Latine students (from 60% to 69%). While the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impacts posed significant challenges for everyone, especially for young people, the District and federal governments invested heavily to improve access to public health insurance, nutrition, and housing support; provide money to families through expansions to the Child Tax Credit; and enhance education supports both during school hours and out of school time.

"Investing in our children and families makes a real difference for their present and futures," said Kimberly Perry, executive director of DC Action, the District of Columbia's member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network. The child and youth well-being data show that District young people continue to have among the highest rates of access to health insurance in the country, have recovered reading proficiency rates to pre-pandemic levels, and are less likely to live in poverty than a few years ago. "We still

have plenty of room for progress, as the data on low birthweight babies and child mortality show, as well as persistent racial disparities on other measures," Perry said. But in this tight budget climate, the highest priority should be ensuring our children and families have the support they need to thrive. We must ensure policymakers pass a budget focused on meeting these needs. The DC Council is currently considering a draft budget that will have a [major impact](#)."

Perry added. "We know what kids need to grow up healthy and connected so they can thrive as adults: stable homes, strong schools, nutritious food, meaningful relationships, and opportunities to learn, play, and grow," Perry said. "Programs that meet these needs are smart investments, fostering long-term gains like employment and economic growth."

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.

In its 36th year of publication, the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* provides reliable statewide numbers to help leaders see where progress is being made, greater support is needed, and which strategies are making a difference. DC Action encourages lawmakers and officials in the District to use this detailed information to unite and respond with initiatives that invest in young people. By offering a local road map, the *Data Book* 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* will be 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 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 DC ACTION

DC Action uses research, data, and a racial equity lens to break down barriers that stand in the way of all kids reaching their full potential. Our collaborative advocacy initiatives bring the power of young people and all residents to raise their voices to create change. We are the home of the DC Out-of-School-Time Coalition, Under 3 DC, and the Youth Economic Justice Coalition. DC Action is also the home of [DC KIDS COUNT](#), an online resource that tracks key indicators of child and youth well-being.