



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

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## **Iowa ranks 9th in 2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book**

*Indicators of well-being in the Casey Foundation report range from high levels of health coverage and housing affordability to worrisome outcomes in education, where the state ranks 20th*

**Des Moines, Iowa** — Iowa remains in the top tier of states in overall child well-being, but there are signs of trouble for the state's children, according to the **2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how kids are faring in post-pandemic America.

Each year, the *Data Book* presents national and state data from 16 indicators in four domains and ranks the states according to how children are faring overall. Iowa's highest ranking — sixth place — came in the economic well-being domain. The state ranked 12th in family and community factors, 15th in health and 20th in education.

"We know what kids need to grow up healthy and connected," said Anne Discher, executive director of Common Good Iowa, a member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network. "They need stable homes, strong schools, nutritious food, meaningful relationships and opportunities to learn, play and grow. They need our leaders to help them and their families forge a path forward."

The state's education indicators are particularly noteworthy, as they largely run counter to longstanding narratives touting Iowans as people who value their community schools:

- 57% of Iowa 3- and 4-year-olds do not attend preschool (rank: 24th, tied with eight other states)
- 71% of Iowa fourth graders are not proficient in reading (rank: 32nd, tied with two other states)
- 73% of Iowa eighth graders are not proficient in math (rank: 24th)
- 10% of Iowa high school students do not graduate on time (rank: 2nd, tied with six other states)

Over the last 15 years, Iowa has increased per-pupil public school funding by an average of just 2%, well below what it takes to provide a quality education to every student. Recently, lawmakers have reversed initiatives to promote welcoming environments for all students and shifted resources away from public schools charged with educating every child regardless of race, disability or LGBTQ+ status toward private schools not held to those same standards.

Like strong public schools, initiatives that meet the needs of our children and their families represent smart investments, fostering long-term gains in employment and economic growth. Iowa continues to rank near the top in several areas, notably the share of children without health insurance (3rd best), the share of children in households facing high housing costs (3rd best), and the share of teens not attending school or working (6th best).

But as with our education results, there are other areas where Iowa's outcomes are concerning. The share of children in poverty — 14%, equaling nearly 100,000 children — places Iowa 22nd among the states. Iowa ranks 24th on the teen birth rate, and just 33rd on the share of teens who are overweight or obese.

In its 36th year of publication, the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* provides reliable statewide numbers to help leaders see where progress is being made, where greater support is needed and which strategies are making a difference. Common Good Iowa encourages lawmakers and officials in Iowa to use this detailed information to unite across party lines 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.

"Iowa kids are depending on our lawmakers — both in Des Moines and in Washington, DC — to prioritize the policies that we know help all families lead good, full and healthy lives and contribute to our country's future," said Discher.

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## **RELEASE INFORMATION**

The 2025 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be 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 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.

## **ABOUT COMMON GOOD IOWA**

Common Good Iowa's team of policy advocates and researchers leverage reliable data, solid analysis and collaborative relationships to craft people-centered policy solutions for our state's most pressing issues. Learn more at [www.commongoodiowa.org](http://www.commongoodiowa.org).