

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

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## **Illinois Ranks 18th in 2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book as YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Urges Focus on Supporting Thriving Kids and Families**

*Data shows mixed results in child well-being across Illinois; significant concerns about increasing child deaths and declining reading proficiency, Annie E. Casey Foundation finds*

**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS** — Illinois ranks 18th in overall child well-being, according to the 2025 KIDS COUNT® Data Book, a 50-state report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation that analyzes how children are faring in post-pandemic America. While Illinois performs relatively well across many indicators, particularly in education and insurance coverage, troubling trends in child and teen death rates and early learning enrollment reveal urgent areas for investment and reform.

Illinois ranked highest in the percentage of children with health insurance, third nationwide, with only 3% of children uninsured in 2023. The state also placed 7th in the education domain, with notable success in math proficiency and preschool enrollment. However, the state's child and teen death rate increased by 30% between 2019 and 2023, and nearly half of 3- and 4-year-olds in Illinois were not attending preschool during that time, both signals of deepening challenges.

"This data tells a clear story; while Illinois has made strides in certain areas like reducing the number of uninsured children and lowering teen births, we are falling short where it matters most like keeping our children safe and preparing them for lifelong learning," said Loukisha Pennix, Chief Youth & Potential Services Officer at YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, Illinois's member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network. "A 30% rise in child and teen deaths is a red flag that demands immediate, coordinated community and policy action."

"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," Pennix 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, where greater support is needed and which strategies are making a difference. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago encourages lawmakers and officials in Illinois 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.

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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). Additional information 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 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 YWCA METROPOLITAN CHICAGO**

Founded in 1876, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a social enterprise committed to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. As a leading association among a national network of more than 200 YWCAs, YWCA Metropolitan is committed to advancing safety, wellness and belonging; unleashing youth and family potential; and driving economic equity. Among a diverse and broad portfolio of services, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a leading provider in the areas of sexual violence and community violence support services, early childhood and childcare provider services, family support services, youth STEM programming, and economic empowerment services. Learn more at [www.ywcachicago.org](http://www.ywcachicago.org).