



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

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Louisiana Ranks 49th Overall in 2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book Despite Gains in Education

Louisiana ranks 35th in Education, but falls short in children's economic well-being, health and community factors, the Annie E. Casey Foundation finds

NEW ORLEANS — Louisiana performed better than most other states in connecting young children to early care and education and on fourth-grade reading proficiency, 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. The data show Louisiana leaders must continue to invest in our youngest children and build upon the state's successful strategies to improve children's literacy.

While Louisiana has made impressive strides in education, the data also show that Louisiana children experience less economic stability, worse health and more concerning community conditions than their peers in most other states. In 2023, 25% of Louisiana children lived in poverty, well above the national rate of 16%.

"Louisiana's improvements in education show the power of using evidence-based strategies to improve outcomes for kids, as well as the value of making smart investments in our state's most precious resource – our children," said Jennifer "Jen" Roberts, CEO of Agenda for Children, Louisiana's member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network. "Moving our state from 49th in overall child well-being won't be easy, but we do know what works: improving families' economic security, making sure children have nutritious food, and building safe, opportunity-rich communities. Making the right investments and policies in children now will not only change the trajectory of their lives, it will also change the trajectory of our entire state and economy."

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. Agenda for Children encourages lawmakers and officials in Louisiana 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.

This year's data book showed:

- With 48 deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-19 in 2023, Louisiana's child and teen death rate was ranked 49th out of 50 states.
- According to the most recent available Census data, 20% of Louisiana children live in a high-poverty neighborhood, compared to just 8% of children nationwide.
- In 2024, 79% of Louisiana eighth graders scored below proficient in math, a higher proportion than the national average (73%).

"As lawmakers consider sweeping changes to core government functions, we call upon our elected officials to continue to prioritize the needs of children," said Teresa Falgoust, Director of Data and Research at Agenda for Children. "We all must support efforts to preserve and expand access to both high-quality early learning and healthcare for working families. And we must work to make communities safer for children so they can focus on learning, growing, and getting ready to live rewarding, productive lives that make Louisiana a better place for all of us."

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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 AGENDA FOR CHILDREN

Agenda for Children has worked for over 40 years to make Louisiana a state where all children can thrive. As Louisiana's member of the KIDS COUNT network, Agenda provides timely, accurate data on child well-being in each of Louisiana's 64 parishes, enabling policymakers and community members to easily assess community needs and measure progress. For more information, visit www.agendaforchildren.org.