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Michigan ranks 33rd in *2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book* as the Annie E. Casey Foundation urges stronger focus on supporting thriving kids and families

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's data show that Michigan's education ranking is down, while the state's health ranking has held steady

LANSING, MICHIGAN — Michigan ranks 33rd in the nation when it comes to overall child well-being and is continuing to fall short in its national education ranking, dropping from 41st to 44th over the past year, according to the *2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book* — a 50-state report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that analyzes how kids are faring in America. The data show Michigan leaders must do more to ensure Michigan children are able to thrive both at home and in their classrooms.

Michigan saw a 10% increase in both the percentage of fourth graders not proficient in reading and the percentage of eighth graders not proficient in math from 2019 to 2024. And there was a 6% increase in the share of young children not in school when looking at data from 2014–2018 compared to data from 2019–2023. It should be noted, however, that the impact of Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program on school enrollment since 2023 is not factored into this data.

"Education has consistently been our lowest ranking domain among the four key domains that the Annie E. Casey Foundation evaluates, pointing to the continued, urgent need for our state leaders to do more to support Michigan students," said Monique Stanton, President and CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy — Michigan's member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network. "Continuing to target school funding with an eye toward equity, while also maintaining universal free school meals, investing adequate funding in student mental health and expanding access to affordable early childhood education are all essential to ensuring we are meeting Michigan kids where they are and setting them up for improved educational outcomes and brighter, healthier futures. Speaking out against federal threats to education is also vital to ensuring our schools stay strong and are able to meet the needs of every student that walks through their doors. Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education would remove protections for thousands of students in Michigan, especially those from low-income households and those receiving special education services."

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. The Michigan League for Public Policy encourages lawmakers and officials in Michigan 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.

While Michigan continued to fare poorly in terms of its national education ranking, the state's best ranking continued to be in health, holding steady at 22nd. A major contributor in Michigan's national health ranking is the large share of children who are covered by health insurance in the state. Thanks in large part to continuous enrollment in Medicaid during the pandemic, Michigan saw nearly 12,000 fewer children without health insurance. However, recent threats to Medicaid, including attempts to dismantle or restrict eligibility, threaten to undo these improvements.

And while Michigan's family and community ranking did slightly worsen, dropping from 28th in 2024 to 29th in 2025, the state saw the most improvement in this area. Notably, Michigan saw a 21% decline in the percentage of children living in high-poverty areas from 2014–2018 to 2019–2023 and a 27% decline in the teen birth rate from 2019 to 2023, the latter of which follows a decades-long national trend. The steady decline in teen births both nationally and here in Michigan is a major public health success story that should be lauded, as it has helped to mitigate the long-term health and economic consequences that often come with teenage childbearing.

In terms of economic well-being, Michigan ranks 28th according to the latest national KIDS COUNT data, which is a slight improvement over the previous year's ranking; however, the state did not see many notable changes in this area. Michigan's child poverty rate remained at 17.6%, 1 in 4 Michigan children live with parents who lack secure employment and 1 in 4 Michigan children live in a household burdened by high housing costs.

"While there were some bright spots in this year's national data from the Casey Foundation, there are also ample opportunities for our state and federal lawmakers to be doing more for kids and families in our state," said Stanton. "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. Programs that meet these needs are smart investments, fostering long-term gains like employment and economic growth. We encourage Michigan leaders and lawmakers alike to use both the national KIDS COUNT data and the state data we will be releasing later this year in informing smart policy and budget decisions that prioritize the well-being and futures of our state's youngest residents," said Stanton.

"By staying grounded in data and driven by what children and families say they need, we can help ensure that all young people have the chance to thrive and contribute meaningfully as adults, helping to grow our future workforce, reduce long-term social and economic costs and build a stronger society for everyone," said Lisa Lawson, president and CEO of the Casey Foundation.

RELEASE INFORMATION
The *2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book* and additional information is 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.