



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

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Missouri Ranks 27th in 2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book as Family and Community Trust Urges Focus on Supporting Thriving Kids and Families

Teen births and child poverty are down in Missouri, affecting child well-being, per data reported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Missouri ranks 27th among states in child well-being, according to the **2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent indicators developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how kids are faring in post-pandemic America. The data show **Missouri** leaders must continue to invest in the state's youngest residents.

The economic well-being of Missouri's children shows signs of improvement after the pandemic: in 2023 about 14 percent of Missouri children lived in poverty, down from 17 percent in 2019. Yet families still struggle in a state where – according to the Casey Foundation's report – more than one in five households with children spent more than 30% of their income on housing in 2023.

The data show a continuing need to invest in education in Missouri. Pre-kindergarten attendance has slipped (the number of three- and four-year-olds absent from pre-K increased by 6 percent over five years) in a state where early-childhood education has been a matter of significant focus and discussion. But for an indicator pertinent to older children, births to teens continued to decline in the state of Missouri, by a factor of 20 percent from 2019 to 2023.

Children's health remains an area of concern. For example, more Missouri babies were born at a low birth weight in 2023 than in 2019; and the reported overall rate of deaths among children increased by 16 percent from 2019 to 2023.

"By paying careful attention to what the indicators tell us, we can leverage resources wisely at the state, community, and district-levels to ensure our children thrive." Tracy Greever-Rice, program director of Missouri KIDS COUNT for the Family and Community Trust. The Family and Community Trust (FACT) is Missouri's member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network.

Each year, the *Data Book* presents data from 16 national and state 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 information to help community leaders, policymakers, and providers see where progress is being made and where greater support is needed, and which strategies are making a difference. The Missouri Family and Community Trust encourages lawmakers and providers in Missouri to use this detailed information to collaborate and prioritize initiatives that invest in young people. By offering a state 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.

"The national data book from the Annie E. Casey Foundation continues to provide valuable insights into obstacles confronting children and families across the nation, a resource that enables Missouri policymakers and advocates to make well-informed choices for family welfare," said William Dent, Executive Director of the Family and Community Trust.

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RELEASE INFORMATION

The 2025 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available at www.aecf.org/databook. 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.