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Ohio Ranks 31st in 2025 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* for Child Well-Being as CDF-Ohio Urges State's Leaders to Address Child Poverty, Graduation Rates

Data shows Ohio's child poverty rate remains unchanged, affecting child well-being, the Annie E. Casey Foundation finds

COLUMBUS, OHIO — Children's Defense Fund-Ohio calls on state lawmakers to take stronger action to support children and young people, following the release of new data that shows Ohio ranks in the bottom half nationwide for child well-being. The findings come from 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.

Among other things, the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* also revealed Ohio ranks 27th for economic well-being, 15th for education, 33rd for health, and 35th for family and community factors. **CDF-Ohio State Director Dr. John Stanford** said the results show Ohio must expand Medicaid and enact more legislation, like a refundable child tax credit, to better address child well-being in the state. With Ohio now ranked 15th in education, this is exactly the wrong time to walk away from the Fair School Funding Formula—sticking with it is key to moving the state forward, not backward.

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.

“This year’s *KIDS COUNT Data Book* confirms what too many Ohio families already know: our systems are falling short in delivering the stability and opportunity every child deserves,” said Dr. John Stanford, State Director of Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio, the state’s member of the Casey Foundation’s *KIDS COUNT* network. “With Ohio ranking 31st overall and particularly low in key areas like health and family and community indicators, the message is clear—we must act with urgency. Expanding Medicaid, adopting a refundable state child tax credit, funding the Fair School Funding Formula, and investing in mental health are not just policy options—they’re necessities. Our children can’t wait.”

The latest data for Ohio show:

- The child poverty rate remains unchanged since 2019 at 18% (35th in the nation).
- There were 30 deaths per 100,000 children and teens ages 1-19 in 2023 (25th in the nation)—an 11% increase since 2019.
- 35% of children ages 10–17 are overweight or obese (43rd in the nation)

Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio knows what kids need to grow up healthy and connected so they can thrive as adults: Affordable childcare, stable homes, strong public 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.

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. CDF-Ohio encourages lawmakers and officials in Ohio 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.

“The data makes it clear: Ohio’s children are not getting the support they need to thrive—and that is a policy choice,” said **Dr. Guillermo Bervejillo, Research Manager at Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio**. “We urge lawmakers to make children a priority in every budget, every committee, and every chamber. Investing in our youngest residents is not only the right thing to do—it’s how we build a stronger, more prosperous Ohio for everyone.”

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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.