

Voices for Utah Children

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Utah Ranks 4th in 2025 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* as Voices for Utah Children Urges Focus on Supporting Thriving Kids and Families

The 2025 *KIDS COUNT*® *Data Book* from the Annie E. Casey Foundation ranks Utah fourth in the nation for child well-being. It highlights progress in poverty reduction and youth engagement while underscoring persistent challenges in housing and early education access.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH — Utah ranks fourth in child well-being, 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 reveals that Utah's leaders must take more decisive action to elevate families' opportunities to benefit children now and in the future. It presents a nuanced picture of child well-being in the state. While there are notable strengths, we cannot ignore the pressing challenges that must be overcome to ensure that every child has the opportunity to flourish and reach their full potential.

Among the most notable improvements, the percentage of children living in poverty dropped from 10% in 2019 to 8% in 2023, indicating some progress in family economic security. Similarly, the percentage of children living in households where no parent has full-time, year-round employment fell from 20% to 16% over the same period.

The report also showed a decrease in the share of teens aged 16 to 19 not attending school or working, down from 5% in 2019 to 4% in 2023, highlighting stronger youth engagement in education and/or employment.

However, not all indicators moved in a positive direction. The percentage of children living in households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing remained relatively unchanged at 25%, emphasizing the ongoing challenge of affordable housing in the state.

Preliminary data for 2023 indicate stable or improving trends in reading and math proficiency and high school graduation rates. Access to early childhood education has remained consistent; however, we must work to create more opportunities for families to access preschool.

"For the most part, these trends are encouraging, but we cannot become complacent," said Martín C. Muñoz, KIDS COUNT Director at Voices for Utah Children. "It is essential to maintain our commitment to equity in education, healthcare, and family support to ensure that all children in Utah have the opportunity to thrive. Additionally, state leaders must prioritize the collection of data so that Utah can see where we are succeeding at helping children thrive and when there are areas that need improvement."

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.

In its 36th year of publication, the *KIDS COUNT*® *Data Book* provides reliable statewide numbers to help leaders see where progress is being made, greater support is needed, and which strategies are making a difference. Voices for Utah Children encourages lawmakers and officials in Utah to use this detailed information to unite across party lines and respond with initiatives that invest in young people. By offering a local roadmap, the *Data Book* equips policymakers, advocates, and communities with the information they need to make decisions that help kids and young people thrive.

Voices for Utah Children's call to action is to utilize these findings to emphasize the importance of ongoing investment in education, health care, and family support systems. Stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, community leaders, and families, must work together to implement evidence-based strategies that address these challenges and build upon the state's strengths.

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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 Voices for Utah Children

Voices for Utah Children advocates and advances policies and practices that are good for all of Utah's children. At Voices for Utah Children, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential. And to achieve this vision, we ensure all kids are ready to learn, and their families are healthy and economically secure. For more information, visit www.utahchildren.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.