



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

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Virginia Ranks 23 in Birthweight in 2025 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* as Virginia Urges Focus on Supporting Thriving Kids and Families Through Medicaid

More than a decade of data shows no progress in low birthweights—advocates demand full protection of Medicaid funding to protect the health of babies and families across Virginia

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA — Around 8,000 babies in Virginia are born too small every year—and the trend hasn't budged in over a decade 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. This new analysis of state data reveals that from 2010 to 2023, Virginia's low birthweight rate has remained stuck between 7.9% and 8.4% of babies born annually in the state, a figure that puts thousands of newborns at higher risk for long-term health complications, developmental delays, and early mortality. The data show **Virginia's** leaders must do more to protect our most vulnerable population – young people and their families – by continuing to oppose cuts to Medicaid.

These numbers are not just statistics—they are a reflection of policies, priorities, and political will. They reveal a system that continues to underinvest in maternal health and too often fails to ensure that all families—particularly low-income, Black, and rural communities—can access consistent, quality care before, during, and after pregnancy.

“Low birthweight is preventable—yet it has become normalized in Virginia,” said Rachael Deane, CEO of Voices for Virginia's Children, Virginia's member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network. “We have the medical knowledge and public health tools. What we don't have is adequate, protected funding—and the nonpartisan commitment to prioritize families.”

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.

“This is a test of values—and right now, too many babies are paying the price,” said Deane. “The results of federal legislation will have an unavoidable impact on children and young people across the State of Virginia. The power to reduce that impact is in agreeing to make young people the agenda across parties and budgets.”

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. Voices for Virginia's Children encourages lawmakers and officials in Virginia 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.

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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 VOICES FOR VIRGINIA'S CHILDREN

Voices for Virginia's Children envisions a Virginia in which our systems center young people, ensuring their ability to realize their brightest potential is no longer predictable by race, socioeconomic status, or geography. Voices champions public policies and legislation that achieve positive and equitable outcomes for young people. Visit www.vakids.org for more information.