

UNDER EMBARGO Until June 8, 2026 at 12:01 a.m. ET

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Alaska Drops to 47th in 2026 KIDS COUNT® Data Book as Alaska Children’s Trust Urges Bold Investment in Children and Families

New Comprehensive Scoring Index Reveals How Alaska’s Policies and Investments Affect Children’s Daily Lives

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Alaska ranks **47th in overall child well-being**, according to the *2026 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, a 50-state report developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how children are faring nationwide. The data reveal a troubling decline from Alaska’s previous ranking of 40th and make clear that Alaska’s leaders must act with urgency to reverse course and invest in the children and families who make up the state’s future.

For the first time this year, states receive a comprehensive score (from 0 to 1,000) in the *Data Book*, not just a ranking. The scores track 16 indicators in four domains — economic well-being, education, health, and family and community factors — over a five-year period from 2019 to 2024. The new scoring system shows whether policies and public investment are actually improving children’s lives, not merely how states compare to each other. Alaska received an overall score of **385**, well below the national score of 547, with its lowest scores in **education (63, ranked 49th)** and **economic well-being (341, ranked 48th)**. Alaska’s overall score has dropped 41 points since 2019, among the largest declines of any state in the nation.

This decline should serve as a wake-up call. Year after year, the Alaska Legislature has struggled to adequately fund essential child and family services, leaving critical programs chronically under-resourced. School districts have been forced to cut programs, close schools, and increase class sizes, while educational outcomes continue to slide. Alaska remains among the states with the highest youth suicide rates in the nation. According to the Alaska Children’s Budget, the state has reduced its investment in children and families by 15% compared to average funding levels from FY2014–2017 — and the 2026 data reflect the real-world consequences of those choices.

“Dropping seven spots in a single year is not a data point — it’s a warning,” said **Trevor Storrs**, President & CEO of Alaska Children’s Trust. “Alaska’s children deserve leaders who will look at this data and respond with action. We know what kids need to thrive: stable homes, strong schools, access to health care, and communities that support families. The question is whether we’ll choose to invest accordingly or continue to invest downstream.”

Key findings for Alaska include:

- **13%** of children live in poverty

- **78%** of 4th graders scored below proficient in reading (ranked 49th nationally)
- **78%** of 8th graders scored below proficient in math (ranked 40th nationally)
- **22%** of high school students are not graduating on time (ranked 48th nationally)
- **9%** of children lack health insurance (ranked 46th nationally)
- **8%** of children live in high-poverty neighborhoods (ranked 33rd nationally)

Despite this decline, Alaska has seen some meaningful policy wins in recent years, expanded access to child care assistance and broadened SNAP eligibility. This year, the legislator has passed some supportive legislation that we hope the Governor will also support like Parental Leave, increased funding for Infant Learning Program, and mental health curriculum for schools. But these gains have not been enough to offset the cumulative impact of disinvestment.

These rankings don't happen in a vacuum. They are the direct result of policy choices and the leaders we elect to make them. With 2026 being a critical election year for Alaska, voters have an opportunity to change course. We need leaders at every level who will put our most valuable resource - our children - first. Alaskans should ask every candidate: what will you do to make Alaska the best place for children, youth, and families to live? The data show us where we are. The ballot box determines where we go. Vote for Kids!

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RELEASE INFORMATION

The *2026 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 or contact ACT Director of Communications Mirna Estrada at (907) 917-8323 or mestrada@alaskachildrenstrust.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 THE ALASKA CHILDREN'S TRUST

Alaska Children's Trust (ACT) is the statewide lead organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. For over thirty years, we have invested resources across Alaska to ensure children live in safe, stable, and nurturing environments. ACT is the Alaska chapter of the KIDS COUNT network. Learn more at www.alaskachildrenstrust.org. Additional information is available at www.alaskachildrenstrust.org/kids-count.