



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

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New 2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book Finds Child Poverty in the District is Increasing, with More Than a Quarter of Children Living in Poverty. DC Action Urges Policymakers to Focus on Budget and Policy Interventions to Support Thriving Kids and Families

New Data Show How the District's Policies and Investment Affect Children's Daily Lives

WASHINGTON, DC — Child poverty in Washington, DC increased from 17% in 2023 to 28% in 2024, even while national rates and those in neighboring Maryland and Virginia all stayed flat or decreased slightly, according to the **2026 KIDS COUNT® Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how kids are faring nationwide. The data show District leaders must do more to support families in meeting their interrelated basic needs. For example, the percentage of children in households spending more than 30% of their income on housing increased from 28% to 41% in that same time period, underscoring the importance of housing supports. The data show the impact of legislation and policies on boosting child well-being throughout the District.

On the positive side, the District continues to have the highest rate of any state of 3 and 4-year-olds attending school - 79%, presumably thanks to the longstanding investment in universal preK for three- and four-year-olds. And DC has among the lowest rates of children without health insurance - just 3%, largely thanks to a relatively expansive Medicaid enrollment policy for children and to programs like the Immigrant Children's Program. However, that rate includes racial disparities - fewer than 1% of non-Hispanic white children are uninsured compared to 2% of Black and 5% of Latine children, according to [KIDS COUNT data](#).

“The data in this report show areas where we’ve already lost ground, like child poverty rates, and areas where the District has historically been a leader but is poised to lose ground due to policymakers’ choices, like early childhood education, public health insurance coverage, and TANF,” said Kimberly Perry, Executive Director of DC Action, the District’s member of the Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT network. Policymakers underfunded early childhood education for infants and toddlers, forcing what is close to an enrollment freeze for child care subsidies last month, which will continue unless the program is adequately funded. And they cut thousands of adults from health care coverage, particularly the Alliance, but also Medicaid, who now face an added hurdle to getting their children enrolled in coverage. And they are poised to eliminate TANF benefits for roughly half of those enrolled, making it harder for families to meet their basic needs. 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.”

In its 37th 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. DC Action encourages lawmakers and officials in DC to use this detailed information to unite 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.

Perry continued: “The DC Council has its first vote on the fiscal year 2027 budget tomorrow. We hope this data encourages them to do the right thing for children and families.”

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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.

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.