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## **Florida Again Ranks 35th in Child Well-Being as FPI Urges Focus on Supporting Thriving Kids and Families**

*Annie E Casey Foundation Launches New Scoring Index to Increase Accountability by Showing How Florida's Policies and Investment Affect Children's Daily Lives*

**STATEWIDE, Fla.** — Florida ranks 35th in the nation for child well-being, according to the **2026 KIDS COUNT® Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent national and state data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The state's rank remains the same as the previous year, and nearly identical to its ranking of 34th in 2019.

The Data Book tracks 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.

Florida's best showing for 2026 is again in the education domain, in which it ranks 15th. Florida ranks 29th in family and community and 35th in health. The state ranks 43rd in economic well-being, which remains the domain where Florida needs the most improvement. The data shows that Florida's leaders must do more to invest in its children in order to boost child well-being throughout the state and all areas of a child's life.

For the first time this year, states receive a comprehensive score (from 0 to 1,000) in the Data Book, not just a ranking. Similar to how the Data Book reports rankings, 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. Florida received a score of 519, the middle of the pack, and below the national score of 547, with highest scores in the family and community domain.

“Florida is making some progress towards improving the state’s child well-being, but the level of investment is not moving the needle in helping Florida families with affordability in housing, access to childcare, and access to medical care, namely Medicaid,” said **Norin Dollard, senior policy analyst and KIDS COUNT director at Florida Policy Institute (FPI)**. “We know what kids need to grow up healthy and connected so they can thrive as adults. FPI works to increase public education funding, ensure eligible children and families have access to Medicaid, and help Florida’s families put food on their tables.”

“Behind every number in this report is a child who is either hungry or fed, housed or homeless, progressing academically or falling behind. No state is consistently getting this right,” said **Lisa M. Lawson, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation**. “The Data Book challenges us to follow the evidence and do what delivers results.”

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. Florida Policy Institute encourages Florida lawmakers and officials 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 2026 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available at [www.aecf.org/databook/](http://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](http://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](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

#### **ABOUT FLORIDA POLICY INSTITUTE**

FPI, the state’s KIDS COUNT partner, is an independent, nonpartisan, and nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing state policies and budgets that improve the economic mobility and quality of life for all Floridians.