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**Indiana Ranks 29<sup>th</sup> in 2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book as Indiana Youth Institute Urges Focus on Supporting Thriving Kids and Families; State Score of 566 is Above National Average**

*New Scoring Index to Increase Accountability by Showing How Indiana’s Policies and Investment Affect Children’s Daily Lives*

**INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA** — Indiana ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in education 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. While the state’s education ranking has improved from 17<sup>th</sup> in 2019, Indiana’s education score is down 77 points. The data show that even though Indiana is doing better than most other states in this area, more must be done to increase math and reading proficiency and get more young children enrolled in school.

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 — from data 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. Indiana received an overall score of 566, above the national score of 547, with its highest score of 627 in economic well-being (ranked 23<sup>rd</sup>) and lowest score of 479 in education (ranked 11<sup>th</sup>).

Indiana Scores and Rankings Across Domains by Data Year						
	2019 Score	2023 Score	2024 Score	2019 Rank	2023 Rank	2024 Rank
<b>Overall Well-Being</b>	549	586	566	31	25	29
<b>Economic Well-Being</b>	640	716	627	18	11	23
<b>Education</b>	556	464	479	17	12	11
<b>Health</b>	497	564	577	36	31	27
<b>Family &amp; Community</b>	502	600	582	33	31	36

Indiana’s overall ranking fell from 25<sup>th</sup> in 2025 to 29<sup>th</sup> in 2026. The state’s economic well-being score also dropped 89 points and ranking fell from 11<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> in that same timeframe. Indiana’s health ranking improved to 27<sup>th</sup>, better than in the last four years. The state ranks lowest in family and community at 36<sup>th</sup>, down from 31<sup>st</sup> in previous years.

The most recent data highlights how, even though Indiana ranks near the top 10 in education when compared to other states, many students are still struggling to meet academic standards. More than half of Indiana 4<sup>th</sup> graders cannot read proficiently, and nearly seven out of ten 8<sup>th</sup> graders are not proficient in math. The percentage of young children attending school (60%) has remained relatively unchanged in the last several years, and just over a tenth of high schoolers (11%) are not graduating on time.

Indiana is making progress in health with the 2026 score up 80 points from 2021 and an improved ranking from 36<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> in that period. The change reinforces how investments in mental and physical health pay long-term dividends.

“These data represent real children. They show where kids are thriving and where adults must do better to ensure every child can reach their full potential. The data reveal where progress is real and illuminate areas where we thought we were succeeding but still have work to do,” said Dr. Tami Silverman,

president and CEO of Indiana Youth Institute, the state's member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network.

"We know kids need stable homes, strong schools, nutritious food, meaningful relationships and opportunities to learn, play and grow so they can grow up health and connected and thrive as adults. Programs that meet these needs are smart investments, fostering long-term gains like employment and economic growth."

In its 37<sup>th</sup> 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. Indiana Youth Institute recognizes youth-serving organizations and professionals are doing important work to provide the kinds of services needed to help kids learn, and those investments should continue. 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.

"Accessible public data provide a crucial reality check on whether states and the nation are making real progress for kids," said Lisa M. Lawson, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. "With these numbers as our guide, we can direct resources where they have the greatest impact and expand opportunity for every child."

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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 INDIANA YOUTH INSTITUTE**

Indiana Youth Institute's mission is to improve the lives of all Indiana children by strengthening and connecting the people, organizations, and communities that are focused on kids and youth. IYI is Indiana's premier source for high-quality data on child well-being. Visit [iyi.org](http://iyi.org) to learn more.

Each year, IYI publishes the Indiana KIDS COUNT® Data Book which provides insight into the issues Hoosier youth are facing today and a data-driven understanding of opportunities and achievement gaps in the lives of Hoosier kids. The 2026 Indiana KIDS COUNT Data Book was released in February. Download the Data Book here: <https://iyi.org/resources/indiana-kids-count-data-book/>.