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Massachusetts Ranks 2nd in 2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book as Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center Urges Continued Focus on Supporting Thriving Kids and Families; State score of 775 is above national average

New Scoring Index to Increase Accountability By Showing How Massachusetts Policies and Investment Affect Children's Daily Lives

Boston, MA — Massachusetts ranks second in the nation in children education and health, 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 the impact of legislation, policies, and the Fair Share surtax can have on boosting child well-being throughout the state.

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.

Massachusetts received a score of **775, above** the national score of 547, with highest scores in the **childhood health domain**.

Below are two highlighted indicators that are extremely prevalent in Massachusetts:

- Massachusetts ranked #2 in the nation for Health, which can be attributed to the success of MassHealth, the statewide medicaid provider. This program, the national model for the Affordable Care Act, is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2026. This overwhelmingly successful program that provides access to healthcare to so many across our state is being threatened by the federal government's funding cut threats to Medicaid.
- Massachusetts ranked #13 in the nation for overall Economic Well-Being. While this ranking may seem to show that children and families are doing well, economically speaking, in our state, a significant amount of children reside in households that are overburdened by the cost of housing. The state needs to continue considering policies that create affordability for housing.

"Massachusetts continues to rank highly overall, which reflects the state's positive progress, especially due to the Fair Share surtax. Though, there are still significant disparities across the Commonwealth when the data are broken by race, geography, and class" said Adam Jones, Senior Policy Analyst of Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (MassBudget), Massachusetts member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network. Massachusetts children and families continue to be significantly impacted by acute threats from the federal government and funding challenges in the state, including a reduction in SNAP benefits, expired healthcare subsidies, lack of housing affordability and high rent burdens, and a reduction in public school funding due to enrollment declines.

"We know what kids, regardless of their socioeconomic background, 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 develop. Programs that meet these needs are smart investments, fostering long-term gains for the state 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.

MassBudget encourages lawmakers and officials in Massachusetts 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. Additional information is 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.