



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

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Oregon Is One of the Best States in the Country at Keeping Kids Insured. We Are One of the Worst at Teaching Them to Read.

The 2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book shows what Oregon's policy choices have produced, and what they haven't

Portland, OR — Oregon ranks third in the nation in ensuring children have health insurance, but 41st in 4th grade reading levels, with only 27% of 4th graders reading at grade level. This information comes from the newly published 2026 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a 50-state report from Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how kids are faring nationwide. Overall, Oregon ranks 23rd nationwide in child wellbeing for 2026.

To say it plainly:

- Oregon has successfully invested in making healthcare accessible, but it's at risk. The KIDS COUNT data shows that as of 2024, approximately 97% of Oregonian children had health insurance coverage - a significant increase from 91% in 2010.
- The education crisis is serious and increasing. Nearly three out of four Oregon fourth graders are not reading at grade level. Three out of four Oregon eighth graders are not meeting math standards.

For the first time in this year's *Data Book*, states now receive a comprehensive score (from 0 to 1,000) in the KIDS COUNT Data Book, not just a ranking. The scores track the same 16 indicators across four domains — economic well-being, education, physical

health, and family & 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. Oregon received an overall score of 592, slightly above the national score of 547, with highest scores in the physical health and the family and community domains, and lowest scores in the education domain.

Oregon has done an incredible job at expanding access to healthcare for our children, in large part thanks to Medicaid expansion. Per the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) in 2025, 40% of Oregonian children are covered by Medicaid, and 28% of all Medicaid enrollees in Oregon are children. However, with the passage of House Resolution 1, known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill,” we are entering uncharted waters. Oregon’s investments in child wellbeing face significant challenges as HR 1 is expected to significantly reduce access to healthcare and increase food insecurity.

With [nearly 95%](#) of Oregonians having health insurance coverage, Oregon faces one of the largest threats in the nation in terms of coverage losses – an estimated 200,000 or more Oregonians may lose access to health insurance coverage in the coming years. While most of those may be adults, when parents and caregivers lose coverage, kids suffer the effects of resulting economic instability and increased likelihood of illness or debilitating injuries that go without treatment.

“Children don’t live in silos, they live in families. When parents and caregivers lose their health coverage, the whole family suffers ripple effects. Our job is to give every child in Oregon the opportunity to thrive, and when essential health coverage is ripped away from families, that opportunity is directly undermined,” said Jenna Marie, Senior Data and Research Manager at Our Children Oregon.

The data show Oregon leaders must do more to support education and teachers, and invest in improving education success and outcomes for Oregon’s children, and Oregon’s future. They also must address the looming threat of decreased federal support for healthcare, or our state’s success can easily become a crisis.

“No one in Oregon can honestly claim that conditions are better today for children than they were five years ago. Until we have a political and economic system that prioritizes children and families, we will not see meaningful improvement.” said David Wieland, Director of Policy and Advocacy at Our Children Oregon.

While the data is illustrative, averages can hide disparities. The National KIDS COUNT Data Book shows that existing gaps between the wellbeing of white children and Black and Indigenous children have generally been persistent or growing over the last five years. These are the cumulative result of disinvestment and structural racism built into our housing, health, and education systems. Our Children Oregon will be publishing additional disaggregated state and local data this coming Fall.

“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” said Bridget Dazey, Executive Director of Our Children Oregon.

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. Our Children Oregon encourages lawmakers and officials in Oregon 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.

Armed with this data, Oregon legislators have a clear mandate and a concrete roadmap; forge a new trajectory of leadership for children, families, and youth, and to set a national standard for effective, meaningful policy.

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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 OUR CHILDREN OREGON

Our Children Oregon (OCO) is a statewide children-focused policy and advocacy organization that stewards Oregon's KIDS COUNT data and leads The Children's Agenda, a coalition of more than 140 child-focused organizations. We use data, community voices, and advocacy to shape policies that help every child and family in Oregon learn, live, and thrive.

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.