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Pennsylvania Improves Child Well-Being Ranking, but Federal Cuts Threaten Progress for Kids and Families

2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book introduces new scoring system showing gains across domains — and the risks posed by Medicaid and SNAP reductions

June 8, 2026 — HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania ranks 18th in child well-being, according to the KIDS COUNT® *Data Book*, a 50-state report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that analyzes how kids are faring nationwide. The data show either slight improvements or steady rankings, so Pennsylvania leaders, including its congressional delegation and state policymakers, must do more to ensure hard-fought progress made for children and families is not reversed.

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 improving children's lives, not merely how states compare with one another. Pennsylvania received a score of 626, well above the national score of 547, with improvements in economic well-being, health, family and community and a static ranking for education.

According to the *Data Book*, Pennsylvania ranks 20th in the health domain, moving up from 21st in 2023. This positive trend was also reflected in our ranking of the percentage of children uninsured, which rose from 25th in 2023 to 19th last year. Pennsylvania's ranking, however, reflects negative nationwide trends in children's uninsured rates rather than a decrease in the percentage of Pennsylvania's children without health insurance; Pennsylvania has 153,000 uninsured children, an increase from 2023. This number is sure to continue to increase as federal law will cause families to lose health insurance coverage.

Last year, Congress passed the largest cuts to Medicaid in the program's history with the passage of H.R. 1 (One Big, Beautiful Bill). The implementation of H.R. 1 is happening in stages, and every day we inch closer towards irreversible damage done to a program that provides health insurance coverage for more than 1.2 million Pennsylvania children (38.2% of the state's child population) who rely on it. This includes children with special health care needs, those living in the foster care system, children in rural areas, children from military families and those in low-income working families.

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children’s exclusive, interactive series of maps, [H.R. 1: Mapping the Cuts](#), shows in unprecedented local detail how H.R. 1’s cuts to Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will impact health care access, food security and economic well-being in every corner of the state. Pennsylvania children and families cannot thrive when the programs many of them rely on are threatened with federal funding cuts and burdensome work-reporting requirements.

“The consequences of H.R. 1 will reach into nearly every corner of family life, making it harder for children to get care, harder for families to put food on the table, and harder for communities to support them,” said Kari King, President and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, Pennsylvania’s member of the Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT network. “This is a serious and immediate threat to children and families across Pennsylvania.”

In the *Data Book’s* economic well-being domain, which examines child poverty among other indicators, Pennsylvania ranks 19th, improving from 22nd in 2023. Based on the foundation’s new scoring methodology, Pennsylvania scored 674, an improvement of 96 points compared to 2019 in the family and community domain, which includes factors such as children in single-parent families and the teen birth rate. However, while Pennsylvania ranked 10th among all states in the education domain, our score was 491, down 145 points from 2019.

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. Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children encourages policymakers and officials in Pennsylvania 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.

“Pennsylvania policymakers must take action to ensure that the progress that has been made will not be lost,” said King. “Our congressional delegation must work to undo the painful cuts included in H.R. 1, and the state legislature must build off the passage of the Working Families Tax Credit in the 2025-26 state budget to enhance programs that lead to family economic stability for every child and family in the commonwealth.”

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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.

ABOUT PENNSYLVANIA PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) is a strong, effective, and trusted voice to improve the health, education, and well-being of children and youth in the commonwealth. Since

1992, its public policy victories have helped countless children learn, thrive and succeed, regardless of circumstances. PPC is statewide, independent, non-partisan and non-profit. Learn more at papartnerships.org.