



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

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**Washington State Drops to 17th in National Rankings for Overall Child Well-Being in 2026 KIDS COUNT® Data Book; Declining Score for Health is a Cause for Concern**

*Data shows that an increasing number of young children in WA are without health insurance. Federal cuts will likely cause this trend to continue.*

**SEATTLE, WA** — Washington state ranks 17th in child well-being, according to the **2026 KIDS COUNT® Data Book**, a 50-state report of recent data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how kids are faring nationwide. Despite performing above average overall, a worrying increase in the number of children without health insurance shows that Washington leaders must do more to protect access to health care for kids and families.

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. Washington received a score of 634, above the national score of 547, with highest scores in the health and family and community domains (753 and 788 respectively), and the lowest scores in the education and economic well-being domains (374 and 621 respectively).

Washington has dropped five places for health from 2019 to 2024, leaving our state at 10th in the nation. While Washington’s performance in three out of the four indicators for child health remains steady, the stark increase in children without health insurance is a significant driver in our falling ranking overall. Notably, the increase in uninsured children from 3% in 2023 to 4% in 2024 is the first time this indicator has moved in a negative direction in over a decade.

“Access to health care is critical to child well-being,” said Dr. Soleil Boyd, Executive Director of Children’s Alliance, Washington state’s member of the KIDS COUNT network. “We know that when families do not have health insurance, they are less likely to get the care they need and deserve. This data coincides with the sunset of pandemic-era assistance policies, which likely contributed to a negative impact on coverage rates. I am concerned that this worrying trend will be [compounded by the cuts to essential programs imposed by the Trump administration](#).”

Other key findings from the most recent *Data Book* include:

- **Washington ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in economic well-being.** The data show that 31% of Washington kids live in households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing, up from 29% in 2019.
- **Washington ranks 9th in family and community:** Notably, the number of children living in high poverty areas was down to 2% according to data from 2020-2024, compared to 7% nationally.
- **Washington ranks 31st in education,** down from 27th based on data from 2023. Both the number of 3- and 4-year-olds not in school (57% in 2024 vs 54% in 2023) and the percentage of high school students not graduating on time (17% in 2023-2024 vs 13% in 2022-2023) are above national averages.

The *Data Book* focuses on the most recent data available from 2024. Therefore, the numbers do not reflect the current reality for kids and families impacted by federal cuts to vital programs that have already come into effect. The reductions to Medicaid and SNAP included in [H.R.1](#) will result in more children losing access to health care and nutrition assistance, and [lead to rising costs for families and increases in child hunger](#).

“We know what kids need to grow up healthy and connected so they can thrive as adults: Stable homes, strong schools, access to health care, meaningful relationships and opportunities to learn, play and grow,” said Dr. Boyd. “To ensure that’s possible for every child in our state, we need progressive revenue. Washington lawmakers took an important step with the passage of the Millionaires Tax this year. We must defend this tax and ensure lawmakers make good on their promise to invest in programs that support kids, families and communities, and protect Washingtonians from the negative impacts of federal policies.”

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. Children’s Alliance encourages lawmakers and officials in Washington 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). Additional information is 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 CHILDREN’S ALLIANCE**

[Children’s Alliance](#) is Washington’s statewide, nonpartisan child advocacy organization. We help people tap into their personal political power so they can advocate for change in their communities. We partner with families, lawmakers, community leaders, service providers and policy experts to develop antiracist policy solutions that improve the lives of Washington kids and build a better shared future for all.