

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

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Wyoming Ranks 12th in 2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book as the Wyoming Community Foundation Urges the State to Address Persistent Health Challenges

New KIDS COUNT Scoring Index Increases Accountability for Wyoming Policies and Investments that Affect Children’s Daily Lives

LARAMIE, WY — Wyoming ranks 12th in overall child well-being in the 2026 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a 50-state report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The publication analyzes how kids are faring nationwide. Wyoming received an overall score of 654 out of 1,000, above the national score of 547. The state’s score reflects strong performances in the economic well-being, and family and community domains.

The data also highlights ongoing challenges in education and health outcomes that continue to affect children and families across the state.

For the first time this year, states received 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. The data reflects a five-year period from 2019 to 2024. The new scoring system better shows whether policies and public investment are actually improving children’s lives, not simply how states compare to each other.

Wyoming’s strongest domain was economic well-being, where the state scored 873 out of 1,000 — well above the national average score of 557 — and ranked 3rd nationally. Wyoming also ranked 7th in family and community with a score of 821, in part due to very few children living in high-poverty neighborhoods, with less than 0.5% living in these neighborhoods as compared to 7% of children nationwide.

“Wyoming’s strong economic ranking shows that many families are benefiting from stability and opportunity, but we can’t overlook the reality that approximately 12,000 Wyoming children still live in poverty,” said Micah Richardson, associate director of policy at the Wyoming Women’s Foundation. “Access to resources that help families make ends meet is hugely important to the well-being of children and families, as well as the long-term strength of our communities.”

Despite these strengths, Wyoming’s education outcomes worsened in key areas. The state received an education score of 440 and ranked 17th nationally. Like much of the rest of the nation, reading proficiency among 4th graders declined. In Wyoming 64% are considered not proficient according to 2024 data. That’s an increase from 62% in 2022. Similarly, 70% of Wyoming 8th graders are not proficient in math, worsening from 69% in 2022.

Commented [CS1]: The data is correct. Alicia - Should this be reworded to be about percentage of children living in high-poverty areas instead of about high poverty areas?

Commented [AV1R2]: Yes

Commented [AV2]: could also change to 59% in 2019 as that's the baseline year being used in the Data Book.

Commented [AV3]: or stick with 63% and change the year to 2019.

For years, Wyoming's lowest performing area has consistently been the health domain. The state did see a health score increase to 484, ranking 39th nationally, which is both a score and rank improvement from 2019 data. Child and teen death rates declined from 36 deaths per 100,000 children and youth in 2019 to 31 deaths per 100,000 children and youth, while the percentage of children without health insurance dropped from 11% to 9%.

"We are so pleased to see child and teen death rates on the decline. But the numbers are still too high," says Richardson. She goes on to say that Wyoming needs to create policies that support young community members' mental health needs. "As a frontier and rural state, solutions are needed that span our geography and ensure children and families can access the care and services they need."

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. The Wyoming Women's Foundation encourages lawmakers and officials across Wyoming to use this detailed information to unite across party lines and pursue policies that invest in young people and strengthen families. By offering a local road map, the Data Book equips policymakers, advocates and communities with the information they need to make decisions that help children 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.

ABOUT THE WYOMING COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

For over 35 years the Wyoming Community Foundation (WYCF) has connected people who care with causes that matter to build a better Wyoming. WYCF has granted more than \$13 million to charitable causes, shared data, and provided a variety of supports to our nonprofit agency fund holders.