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THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

2025 KIDS COUNT® DATA BOOK

State Trends in Child Well-Being

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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JoAnna Caywood contributed her expertise on child and youth well-being to this year's publication.

In addition, the KIDS COUNT Network — with members representing every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (see pages 40–41) — is instrumental in making the *Data Book* available to national, state and local leaders across the country.

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FOREWORD

Good decisions start with good data — especially when it comes to supporting children and families. For 36 years, the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* has provided a clear, consistent overview of children's well-being, using federal data collected across all 50 states. These reliable national- and state-level measures help leaders see where there is progress, where greater support is needed and which strategies are making a difference. By offering both a big-picture view and a local road map, the *Data Book* provides policymakers, advocates and communities with the information they need to make decisions that help kids and young people thrive.

The KIDS COUNT indicators capture what children and youth need most in four domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. Each domain has four indicators, for a total of 16.[1] Because state policies play a critical role, the outlook for child well-being depends on where a child is growing up.

This year's trends paint a complex picture: steady progress in some areas, setbacks in others and persistent opportunities to do better for kids and their families. Since 2019, seven of the 16 key indicators have improved, six have worsened and three have not changed. Positive trends include reductions in child poverty, children living in high-poverty areas and teen births, along with increases in health insurance coverage, secure parental employment, heads of households with at least a high school diploma and on-time high school graduation. Many of these shifts reflect decades-long trends, while others highlight the resilience of kids and families after pandemic setbacks and the success of pandemic-era policies in strengthening support for those who needed it most.

The Education domain experienced the greatest setbacks, with three of its four indicators worsening since 2019. Preschool participation has not yet rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. Reading and math proficiency have declined — consistent with the well-documented toll on student learning and a rise in chronic absenteeism.[2] At the same time, high school graduation rates have continued to rise — an encouraging reflection of students'

perseverance and the support of families, educators and communities.

In the area of Health, 5% of children lacked health insurance in 2023 — an improvement from 6% in 2019 and an encouraging milestone that shows what is possible with strong, coordinated policies.

Children live in families and are shaped by their communities, and we also see hopeful trends in the Family and Community indicators. In 2023, teen birth rates declined further, and more children lived in families with the head of household having at least a high school diploma and in communities with less concentrated poverty. These improvements remind us that while progress is never guaranteed, individual efforts and effective investments in kids and families can achieve it.

Yet challenges remain. In 2023, 16% of children — more than 11 million young people — were still living in poverty. Nearly 1 in 3 children lived in households burdened by high housing costs, reflecting significant financial pressure on families.

Where a child lives continues to matter profoundly for their health and quality of life. Geographic disparities have persisted for years, shaped by differences in state and local policies, economic conditions, infrastructure, resources, neighborhood characteristics and community investment. These realities are reflected not only at the state level but also in communities across the country.

The *2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book* underscores these geographic patterns. The states with the greatest challenges are concentrated in the South and Southwest — including Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and West Virginia. In contrast, the Northeast and Midwest are home to many of the highest-performing states, such as Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota and Vermont. Utah, in the Mountain West, also stands out for consistently strong outcomes. A deeper look at state-level indicators offers important lessons about where progress is being made and where greater investment is still needed.

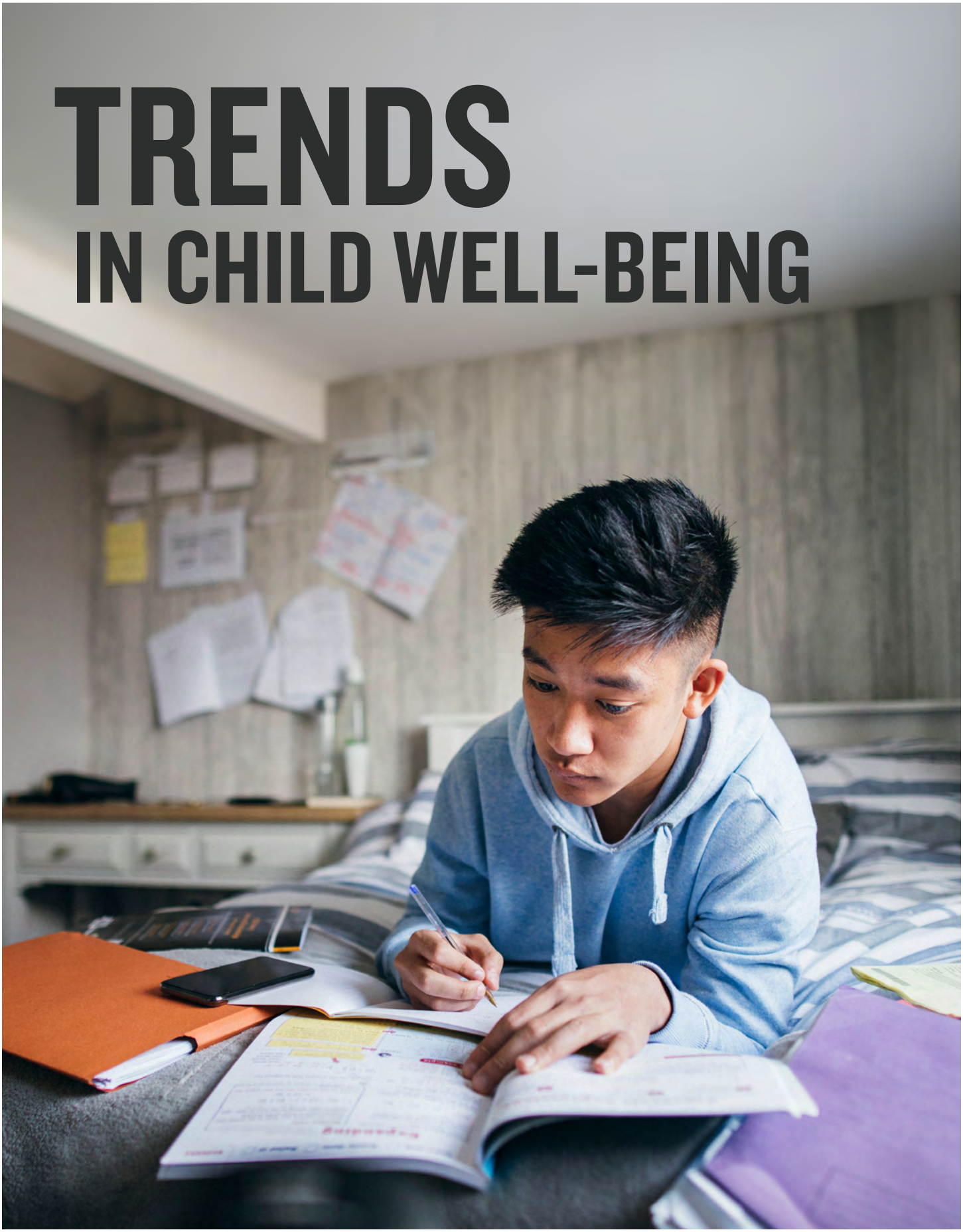
Every state has room to grow and strengths to build on — and the data demonstrate that. Some states have made notable gains in areas such as high school graduation or concentrated poverty, even while facing broader challenges. Others that rank high overall still confront serious needs, including persistent child poverty or housing burdens. And even strong performance at the state or domain level can mask the reality that millions of individual children are still struggling to access the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

While progress is uneven, the direction is clear. We know what kids need to grow up healthy and connected: stable homes, strong schools, nutritious food, meaningful relationships and opportunities to learn, play and grow. These are shared needs across communities — and meeting them is a shared responsibility.

This moment calls for focus, creativity and commitment. It calls on leaders at every level to act boldly where improvement is needed and rely on what we know works. By staying grounded in data and driven by what children and families say they need, we can help ensure that all young people have the chance to thrive and contribute meaningfully as adults, helping to grow our future workforce, reduce long-term social and economic costs, and build a stronger society for everyone.

Lisa M. Lawson
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING



Since 1990, the Casey Foundation has ranked states annually on overall child well-being using a selection of indicators. Called the KIDS COUNT index, these indicators capture what children and youth need most to thrive in four domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. Each domain has four indicators, for a total of 16. These indicators represent a key selection of the best available data to measure the status of child well-being at the state and national levels. For a more thorough description of the KIDS COUNT index, visit **www.aecf.org/resources/kids-count-index**. And for the latest data on these and other indicators, explore the KIDS COUNT Data Center at **datacenter.aecf.org**.

National Trends in Child Well-Being

The latest data in Table 1 reveal the status of children before and after the pandemic, largely comparing 2019 to 2023. The results are decidedly uneven — only seven of 16 indicators gained ground, while six measures worsened and three others held steady. Many changes reflect longer-term trends that have been unfolding for decades, while others demonstrate the resilience of kids and families and the success of pro-family policies in shoring up those who needed support during the pandemic.

Among the four domains of child well-being covered by the index, the most progress occurred in Family and Community, while the largest setbacks were seen in Education. These trends are consistent with the pandemic's well-documented toll on student learning and school experiences.[3] The Economic Well-Being and Health domains show mixed news, each with bright spots and areas of serious concern. The picture gets more complex when we dig deeper.

Recognizing the integral role of families and neighborhoods in shaping children's lives, it is heartening that three of four Family and Community measures improved. In fact, the share of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods fell by 43% over the past decade,[4] a reflection of the economic recovery after the Great Recession and a sign that past investments in communities and targeted support for families may be paying off.[5] While this is encouraging, a stalled child poverty rate and intergenerational poverty continue to be pressing concerns.[6] The teen birth rate showed dramatic change between 2019 and 2023, dropping by almost 25%. This rate has been declining for decades — down nearly 80% since 1990 — primarily due to increased use of effective contraception and decreased sexual activity among younger teens, as well as other factors.[7] This demonstrates the power of informed personal responsibility and stronger policies that have evolved from a narrow focus on reducing teen pregnancy to multipronged strategies aimed at promoting youth development and health more broadly.[8] However, the U.S. teen birth rate remains above that of most peer nations.[9] Another bellwether indicator — children whose household head lacks a high school diploma — also improved in recent years, reflecting larger trends; this measure has been on the decline for nearly two decades, falling by more than 30% since 2005.[10] On the other hand, the percentage of children in single-parent families has remained fairly even, at just above 1 in 3, for about 15 years.[11]

TABLE 1: NATIONAL TRENDS

16 Key Indicators of Child Well-Being by Domain

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

	UNITED STATES		
Children in poverty US 11,445,000	17% 2019	16% 2023	↓ BETTER
Children whose parents lack secure employment US 18,437,000	26% 2019	25% 2023	↓ BETTER
Children living in households with a high housing cost burden US 22,134,000	30% 2019	30% 2023	= SAME
Teens not in school and not working US 1,168,000	6% 2019	7% 2023	↑ WORSE

EDUCATION

	UNITED STATES		
Young children (ages 3 and 4) not in school US 4,317,000	52% 2014–18	54% 2019–23	↑ WORSE
Fourth graders not proficient in reading US N.A.	66% 2019	70% 2024	↑ WORSE
Eighth graders not proficient in math US N.A.	67% 2019	73% 2024	↑ WORSE
High school students not graduating on time US N.A.	14% 2018–19	13% 2021–22	↓ BETTER

N.A.: Not available

HEALTH

	UNITED STATES		
Low birth-weight babies US 308,263	8.3% 2019	8.6% 2023	↑ WORSE
Children without health insurance US 4,155,000	6% 2019	5% 2023	↓ BETTER
Child and teen deaths per 100,000 US 22,841	25 2019	29 2023	↑ WORSE
Children and teens (ages 10 to 17) who are overweight or obese US N.A.	31% 2018–19	31% 2022–23	= SAME

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

	UNITED STATES		
Children in single-parent families US 23,531,000	34% 2019	34% 2023	= SAME
Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma US 7,998,000	12% 2019	11% 2023	↓ BETTER
Children living in high-poverty areas US 5,546,000	10% 2014–18	8% 2019–23	↓ BETTER
Teen births per 1,000 US 140,977	17 2019	13 2023	↓ BETTER

N.A.: Not available

Looking at Education trends, student reading and math proficiency have taken a hit since the pandemic. In 2024, fully 70% of fourth graders were not reading proficiently, worsening from 66% in 2019 — essentially undoing a decade of progress.[12] Similarly in 2024, 73% of eighth graders scored below proficient in math, substantially worse than 67% in 2019 but a slight improvement from 74% in 2022. This is even more troubling when we consider that these indicators are strongly tied to future academic achievement, workforce readiness and economic success.[13] Here, too, the United States lags behind comparable countries in student reading and math, although it's not too late for action — leaders can strengthen our education system to get kids back on track.[14] Early childhood education also is linked to later academic success and positive health outcomes, but preschool attendance remains a challenge for the country.[15] More than half (54%) of young children ages 3 and 4 were not enrolled in school in 2019–23, worse than 52% in 2014–18. Access to high-quality preschool is especially limited for certain groups, including kids in low-income families.[16]

The latest high school graduation data show a one percentage point improvement from 2018–19 to 2021–22, continuing a decade-long trend.[17] Considering the significant pandemic disruptions in education, this is a noteworthy achievement.

As an essential gauge of Economic Well-Being, the child poverty rate improved slightly between 2019 and 2023 but remained at 16% for the second year in a row — representing 11.4 million kids in 2023.[18] Children in the United States are more likely to live in poverty than the general population.[19] In the last two decades, the child poverty rate peaked at 23% in 2011 and 2012 and has declined overall since then.[20] Pro-family policies, such as the expanded child tax credit and other relief measures, buffered low-income families from the worst effects of the pandemic's economic crisis in 2020–21 and boosted the nation's economic recovery. The expanded child tax credit significantly reduced child poverty, strengthened family financial security and may have increased parents' short- and long-term labor force attachment.[21] One indication of economic recovery: The share of kids whose parents lack stable employment improved by one percentage point between 2019 and 2023, and the latest figure of 25% was down sharply from 29% in 2021.[22]

No progress was made, however, regarding the nation's nearly 1 in 3 children living in households burdened by high housing costs. In the decade before the pandemic, this figure steadily improved from 41% in 2010 to 30% in 2019, but it has since stagnated for four years straight.[23] When only kids in low-income families are considered, this rate doubles — with 61% facing high housing cost burdens in 2023, an increase from 60% in 2019.[24]

While the share of teens who are disconnected from school and work was marginally worse in 2023 (7%) compared to 2019 (6%), this figure stayed at 7% in eight of the last 10 years. It has improved, though, from its peak of 9% in the previous decade.[25] Still, the current rate represents 1.2 million young people who need support reengaging in education and work settings, and does not include an additional 3 million young adults ages 20 to 24 grappling with the same challenges.[26]

In the Health domain, news is mixed. The child and teen death rate rose by a distressing 16% since 2019, although 2023 marks this rate's first decline in five years. That is, it dipped from 30 deaths in every 100,000 young people ages 1 to 19 in 2022 to 29 deaths per 100,000 in 2023 — translating to 22,841 young lives lost in 2023.[27] Leading causes of mortality

for this group are accidents (mostly involving vehicles but that is decreasing), homicides and suicides.[28] This death rate had generally declined for decades before surging in 2020; while COVID-19 contributed, this rise was largely attributable to increasing firearm deaths and drug overdoses, particularly among teens ages 15 to 19 who have far higher death rates than kids ages 1 to 14.[29]

The rate of babies born at a low weight (less than 5.5 pounds) is a key health indicator and leading cause of death for infants. This measure has been going in the wrong direction for decades — climbing from 7% in 1990 to 8.3% in 2019 and plateauing at a high of 8.6% in 2022 and 2023.[30]

In promising news, 95% of children were covered by health insurance in 2023, maintaining gains from the previous two years and a bump up from 94% in 2019. Pandemic-era health care policies are credited for this progress, although their expiration during and after 2023 will mean rising rates of uninsured kids unless action is taken.[31] Having insurance is critical for accessing care to address health needs.

Even though the children's insured rate was high in 2023, nearly a third (31%) of young people ages 10 to 17 were overweight or obese in 2022–23, down from 33% in 2020–21 and a return to the pre-pandemic rate.[32] The pandemic exacerbated this serious public health problem, and the current rate is still too high.[33] Obesity and overweight are chronic conditions influenced by biological, socioeconomic and environmental issues. To reduce these rates among youth, comprehensive approaches to prevention, health promotion and access

to care are critical.[34] Health care for young people also can be improved by strengthening care coordination, family support and financing mechanisms. By 2050, it is projected that this issue will cost the U.S. $13.6 billion per year in direct health care expenditures and an additional $49 billion in indirect costs.[35]

The *2025 Data Book* points to concerning needs among the nation's young people, from high rates of obesity and deaths to waning test scores and millions disconnected from school or work. We know from other data, too, that youth mental health is a growing crisis.[36] At the same time, teen birth rates continue to decline. And, if we compare the *2024 Data Book* to this one, only one indicator went in the wrong direction in the most recent year — fourth grade reading proficiency.

Disaggregating Data on Child Well-Being

To improve well-being, we must ensure progress reaches all children. Table 2 on page 12 sheds further light on the status of children's well-being by disaggregating the index's 16 indicators by race and ethnicity. This deeper look uncovers widespread disparities that have been entrenched for years. A single measure can help illustrate: During 2019–23, 1 in 5 (20%) Black and American Indian or Alaska Native kids lived in high-poverty areas, more than twice the national rate (8%). Latino children also were more likely to live in areas of concentrated poverty (11%), while multiracial kids were as likely as their peers nationwide (8%), and white and Asian and Pacific Islander children were much less likely (3%).

American Indian or Alaska Native children experience worse outcomes compared to the national average on all but one of these measures — low birth weight. Additionally, Black and Latino kids have not fared as well as their peers nationally on most of these indicators. Tragically, the death rate for Black children and youth is now close to twice the national rate, rising nearly 30% between 2019 and 2023 from 41 to 53 deaths per 100,000 young people ages 1 to 19.[37] The latest data show that Black children are doing better than average on preschool enrollment and having a household head with a high school diploma, and they match the U.S. total on uninsured rates, whereas Latino kids outperform national rates of low birth-weight babies and child and teen deaths.

White and Asian and Pacific Islander children fare better than national averages on all indicators with only two exceptions for the latter group: Asians and Pacific Islanders have a higher rate of low birth-weight babies and the share living in households burdened by high housing costs was level with the U.S. average in 2023. It's important to note that most data sources combine all Asian and Pacific Islander children together, and the result often masks large disparities, suggesting that these kids do better than their peers. However, the many diverse Asian and Pacific Islander child populations experience vastly different outcomes.[38] For instance, the poverty rate for Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander children (20%) is twice that of Asian kids alone (10%), according to 2019–23 data. Among specific Asian and Pacific Islander populations, child poverty ranges from a low of 5% for Asian Indian, Bhutanese and Taiwanese children to more than a fifth for Bangladeshi (21%), Thai (22%), Samoan (25%) and Burmese (29%) children.[39]

What trends were shared by all racial and ethnic groups? On the positive side, all groups presented in Table 2 saw reductions in teen birth rates (2019 to 2023) and in children living in high-poverty areas (2014–18 to 2019–23). Conversely, all groups experienced losses in reading and math proficiency (2019 to 2024), lower preschool enrollment (2014–18 to 2019–23) and worsening rates of low birth-weight babies (2019 to 2023).[40]

We know what children need to thrive — essentials such as food, housing, mental and physical health care; adequate household income; quality education and work opportunities as they age; permanent relationships with caring adults; and safe, stable environments at home and in their communities. While many children in America are doing well, it is evident from these data that large swaths of the population are not. Leaders have an opportunity now to make kids a priority, apply what we know works and secure a strong future for children and our nation.

National and State Data Profiles Online

National and state profiles providing current and trend data for all 16 indicators, as well as an interactive look at the *Data Book*, are available at **www.aecf.org/databook**. In addition, thousands of child and family well-being indicators, including those cited in the *Data Book*, are available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center at **datacenter.aecf.org**.

TABLE 2: NATIONAL TRENDS

Key Indicators by Race and Hispanic Origin

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	National Average	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White (non-Hispanic)	Two or More Races
Children in poverty 2023	16%	27%	10%	29%	22%	10%	18%
Children whose parents lack secure employment 2023	25%	39%	18%	40%	30%	19%	27%
Children living in households with a high housing cost burden 2023	30%	33%	30%	44%	40%	22%	34%
Teens not in school and not working 2023	7%	10%	3%	9%	8%	6%	7%

EDUCATION	National Average	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White (non-Hispanic)	Two or More Races
Young children (ages 3 and 4) not in school 2019–23	54%	60%	53%	53%	61%	52%	56%
Fourth graders not proficient in reading 2024	70%	85%*	50%*	84%*	80%	61%	65%*
Eighth graders not proficient in math 2024	73%	88%*	43%*	90%*	86%	63%	70%*
High school students not graduating on time 2021–22	13%	26%*	6%*	19%*	17%	10%	N.A.

HEALTH	National Average	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White (non-Hispanic)	Two or More Races
Low birth-weight babies 2023	8.6%	8.5%	9.4%	14.3%	7.9%	7.0%	9.4%
Children without health insurance 2023	5%	11%	4%	5%	9%	4%	6%
Child and teen deaths per 100,000 2023	29	31	16	53	27	25	18
Children and teens (ages 10 to 17) who are overweight or obese 2022–23	31%	34%*	22%*	38%*	39%	26%	30%*

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	National Average	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White (non-Hispanic)	Two or More Races
Children in single-parent families 2023	34%	50%	16%	64%	42%	24%	38%
Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma 2023	11%	23%	10%	10%	25%	5%	15%
Children living in high-poverty areas 2019–23	8%	20%	3%	20%	11%	3%	8%
Teen births per 1,000 2023	13	16	3	20	21	8	12

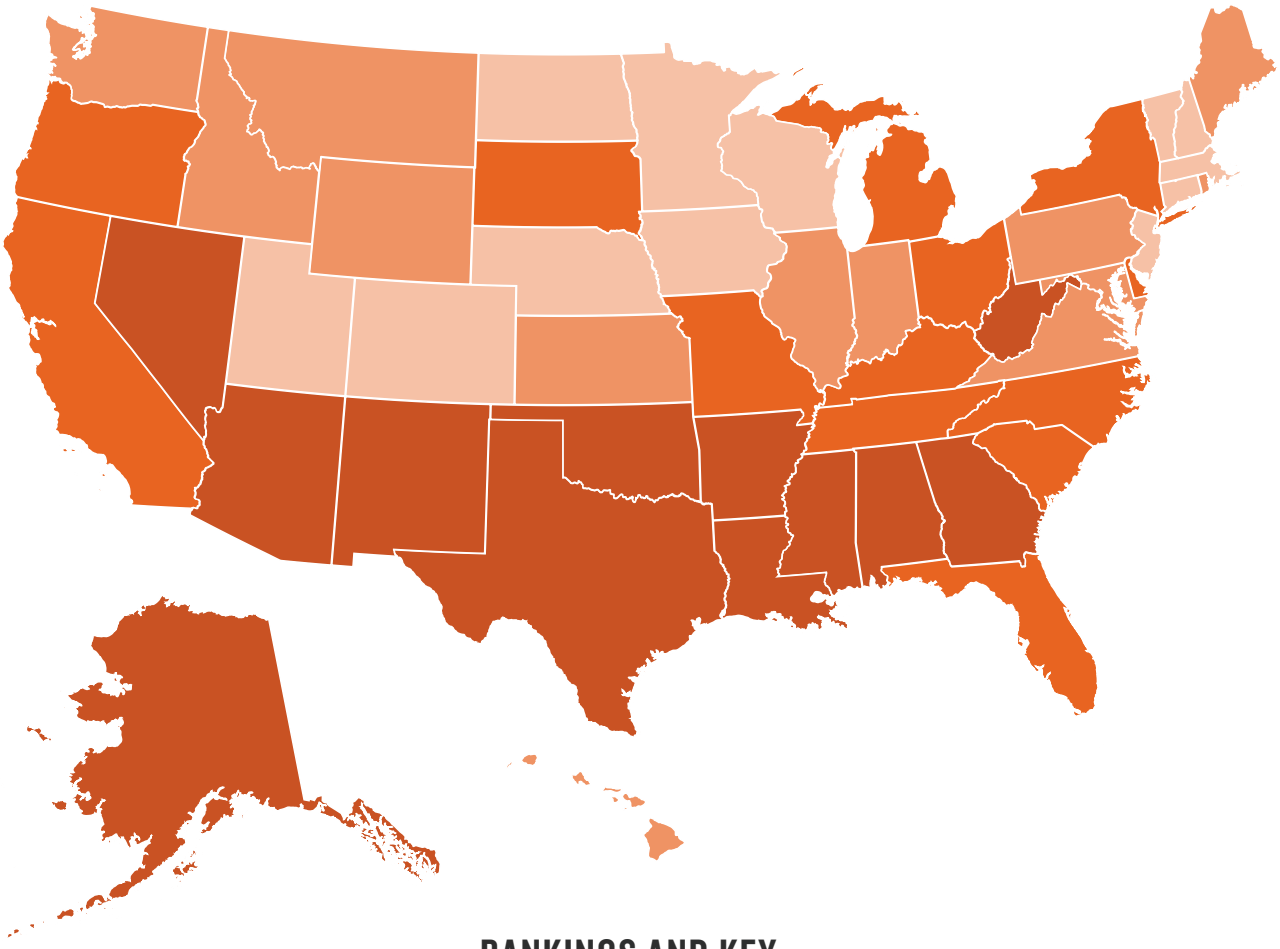
*Data are for non-Hispanic children. N.A.: Not available

OVERALL WELL-BEING

The Foundation derives a composite index of overall child well-being for each state by combining data across four domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. These composite scores are then translated into a state ranking for child well-being.

A 2025 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF

OVERALL CHILD WELL-BEING



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. New Hampshire	13. Virginia	26. South Dakota	39. Georgia
2. Vermont	14. Kansas	27. Missouri	40. Alaska
3. Massachusetts	15. Idaho	28. Oregon	41. West Virginia
4. Utah	16. Washington	29. New York	42. Arizona
5. Minnesota	17. Maine	30. Delaware	43. Alabama
6. North Dakota	18. Illinois	31. Ohio	44. Texas
7. New Jersey	19. Rhode Island	32. California	45. Arkansas
8. Connecticut	20. Pennsylvania	33. Michigan	46. Oklahoma
9. Iowa	21. Maryland	34. North Carolina	47. Nevada
10. Nebraska	22. Montana	35. Florida	48. Mississippi
11. Wisconsin	23. Wyoming	36. Kentucky	49. Louisiana
12. Colorado	24. Hawaii	37. Tennessee	50. New Mexico
	25. Indiana	38. South Carolina	

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.

While national data are important for tracking major trends in U.S. children's well-being, state data tell us how conditions vary for kids across the country. Drilling down to the state level sheds light on the geographic areas where children, youth and families face heightened challenges and warrant additional attention.

Location matters when it comes to children's health and quality of life. This is evident not just at the state level but also at the community level, exemplified by many indicators that can be found in the KIDS COUNT Data Center at **datacenter.aecf.org**. Large disparities in the status of kids by geography have endured for years, often fueled by state and local factors, including the types of policies in place, economic conditions, infrastructure, available resources, neighborhood characteristics and population socioeconomics. For instance, state and local policies can affect children's access to healthy food; quality health care, child care and education; clean air; affordable housing; and safe neighborhoods with support services — which are linked to positive outcomes for kids.[41] Within local communities, neighborhood conditions such as poverty and safety, which strongly influence child and youth well-being, often vary down to the census-tract level. Naturally, children's lives are highly shaped by individual and family characteristics, as well.

The 2025 KIDS COUNT index underscores regional differences in child well-being, visualized by the map on page 15. In broad terms, most states with the lowest rankings for overall child well-being consistently fall in the southern portion of the country. This year, New Mexico (50th), Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Alabama, Arizona and West Virginia were the lowest-performing states.

At the upper end of the rankings, the Northeast is home to five of the top-scoring states overall in 2025: New Hampshire (first), Vermont (second), Massachusetts (third), New Jersey (seventh) and Connecticut (eighth). Another region with consistently high-ranking states is the Midwest, with five states placing in the top tier for overall child well-being: Minnesota (fifth), North Dakota (sixth), Iowa (ninth), Nebraska (10th) and Wisconsin (11th). In the Mountain region of the West, one standout state is Utah, which ranks fourth.

In the Pacific region, Alaska faces unique struggles compared to its peer states, ranking 40th in 2025, compared to California (32nd), Oregon (28th), Hawaii (24th) and Washington (16th). Rankings by domain provide more insight into how kids are faring in Alaska and other states. For instance, Alaska placed 49th in Education and 42nd in Economic Well-Being but scored higher in Health (34th) and Family and Community (21st). The other Pacific states score relatively well across all areas of the index, although California (44th in Economic Well-Being) and Oregon (43rd in Education) each have one low-scoring domain.

Delving deeper into findings by domain, some states that rank poorly overall still demonstrate areas of strength. For example, while Mississippi ranks at or near the bottom overall and in the Health, Economic Well-Being and Family and Community domains, it ranks 16th in Education. Several other Southern states see similar outcomes, such as Florida, which ranks 43rd in Economic Well-Being but 19th in Education.

Though Northeastern states generally perform well in the index's overall rankings, some states in this region show vastly uneven scores across domains, revealing critical

areas of need for kids. New York, for instance, ranks near the top in Health (seventh) and Education (eighth) but falls close to last in Economic Well-Being (46th). Maine, on the other hand, is 41st in Education — far below any other state in this region — which is the opposite end of the spectrum from ranking sixth in Family and Community.

Along the same lines, North Dakota had the most disparate scores of any state this year, ranking first in Economic Well-Being but 42nd in Education. In the Midwest region, only one other state was near North Dakota's Education ranking in 2025: Michigan, at 44th.

While the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked, kids in these two locations face significant challenges — and often fare worse than their counterparts in the states — according to the indicator breakdowns by geography in Appendix B. These data, along with the full state rankings by domain on the next pages, show that every location has opportunities to improve children's lives. Even states scoring high in Economic Well-Being, for example, still show substantial numbers of kids in families struggling to meet basic needs.

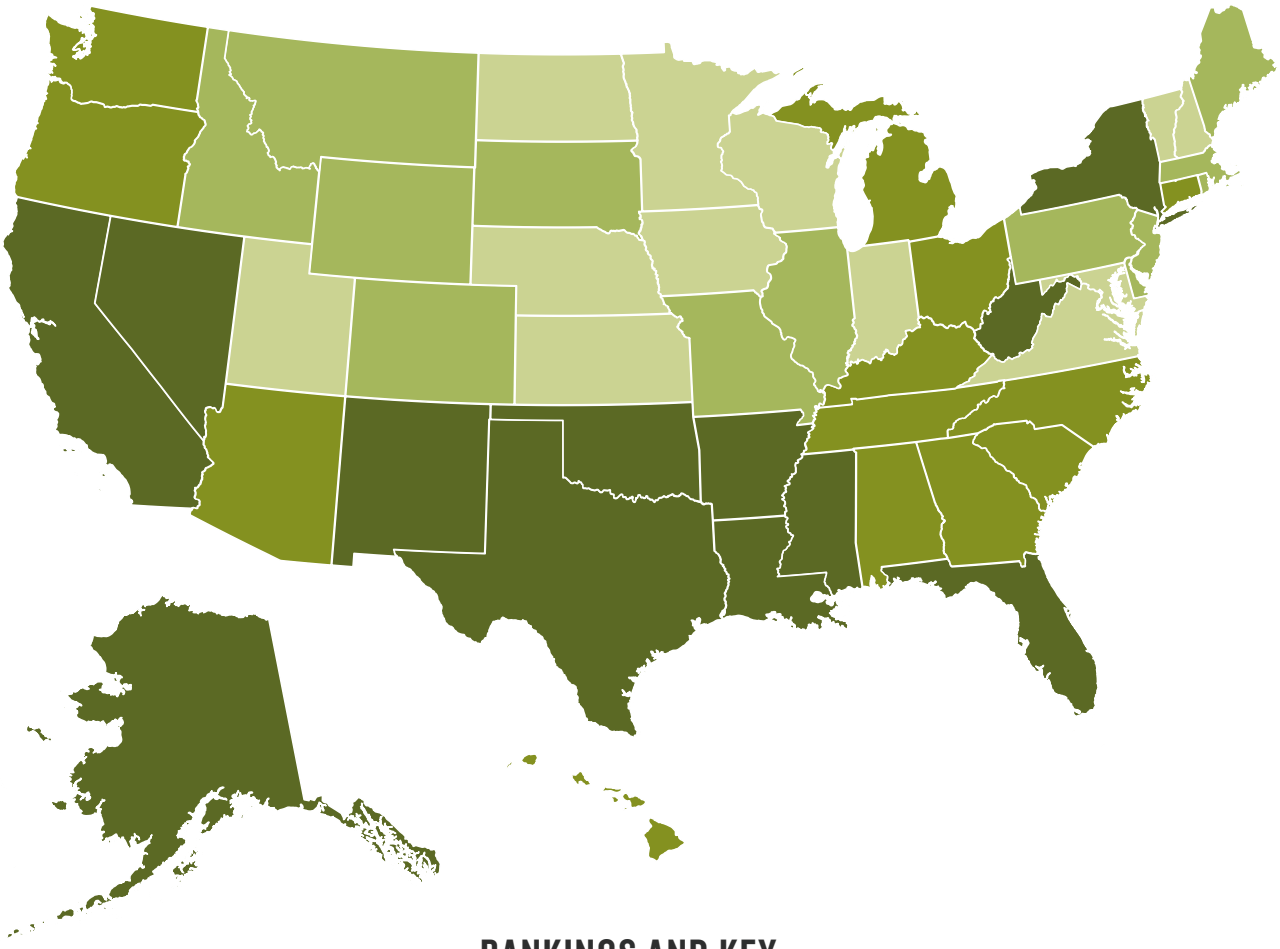
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Indicators: child poverty; stable parental employment; high housing cost burdens; teens not in school or working

Family financial stability provides a critical foundation for healthy child and youth development. Adequate economic resources enable kids to get life's essentials — such as quality housing, food, health care, schools and neighborhoods — and grow into strong teens and adults. When parents do not have affordable housing, stable employment or adequate wages, their ability to meet basic family needs and access resources to promote their kids' well-being is limited. Poverty can disrupt children's cognitive, mental and physical health, and then reverberate across their lifespan with increased risks of poor school, work and health outcomes in adolescence and adulthood. Kids in families who live just above the poverty line often struggle, too, and tend to fare worse than kids in higher-income families. The impact goes well beyond individuals, with the U.S. cost of child poverty alone estimated at up to $1 trillion annually due to lower productivity and higher medical and other expenditures.[42]

A 2025 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. North Dakota	13. Missouri	26. Connecticut	39. West Virginia
2. New Hampshire	14. South Dakota	27. Ohio	40. Oklahoma
3. Nebraska	15. Colorado	28. Michigan	41. Texas
4. Minnesota	16. Maine	29. North Carolina	42. Alaska
5. Kansas	17. Delaware	30. Washington	43. Florida
6. Iowa	18. Illinois	31. Arizona	44. California
7. Vermont	19. Idaho	32. Oregon	45. Arkansas
8. Wisconsin	20. Wyoming	33. Hawaii	46. New York
9. Utah	21. Montana	34. Kentucky	47. Mississippi
10. Maryland	22. Pennsylvania	35. Tennessee	48. Nevada
11. Indiana	23. New Jersey	36. Alabama	49. New Mexico
12. Virginia	24. Rhode Island	37. Georgia	50. Louisiana
	25. Massachusetts	38. South Carolina	

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.

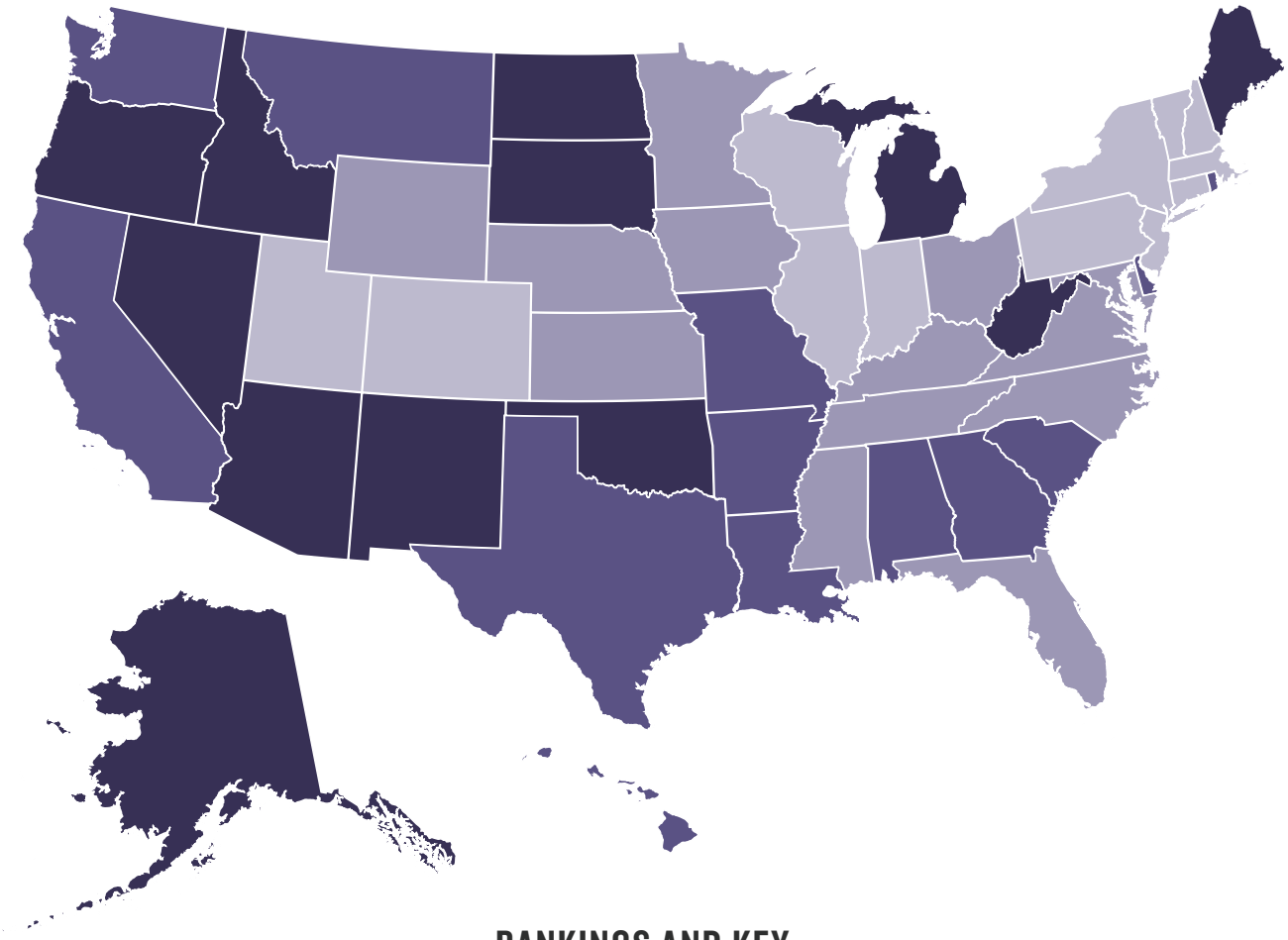
EDUCATION

Indicators: young children not in school; fourth grade reading; eighth grade math; high school graduation

The roots of educational achievement and overall well-being are established at the beginning of a child's life. Early experiences are formative in preparing kids for lifelong learning, and quality early childhood education is strongly linked to long-term student success and positive health.[43] Early childhood learning opportunities, including preschool, improve school readiness, which is especially important given that kids who enter kindergarten behind their peers may not catch up. As students reach higher grades, fourth grade reading and eighth grade math proficiency are key milestones predictive of later education, work and economic success. Likewise, high school graduation is linked to better health and earnings in adulthood. Quality secondary education also is vital, recognizing that adolescence is another formative phase of development, when youth are navigating profound physiological and life transitions, with potentially lasting impacts. Unfortunately, access to quality education is uneven and disparities in student achievement exist by income status, race and ethnicity, and other characteristics.[44] Since school performance is affected by issues such as whether students are feeling safe, healthy, hungry, depressed or worried about their families, strategies to improve academic success require working across sectors to promote student well-being.

A 2025 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF

EDUCATION



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. Massachusetts	13. Virginia	26. Montana	39. South Dakota
2. New Jersey	14. Tennessee	27. Washington	40. Idaho
3. Connecticut	15. Ohio	28. Rhode Island	41. Maine
4. New Hampshire	16. Mississippi	29. Hawaii	42. North Dakota
5. Utah	17. Minnesota	30. California	43. Oregon
6. Wisconsin	18. Maryland	31. Texas	44. Michigan
7. Illinois	19. Florida	32. Georgia	45. West Virginia
8. New York	20. Iowa	33. Missouri	46. Nevada
9. Colorado	21. Nebraska	34. South Carolina	47. Arizona
10. Pennsylvania	22. Wyoming	35. Louisiana	48. Oklahoma
11. Indiana	23. North Carolina	36. Arkansas	49. Alaska
12. Vermont	24. Kansas	37. Delaware	50. New Mexico
	25. Kentucky	38. Alabama	

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.

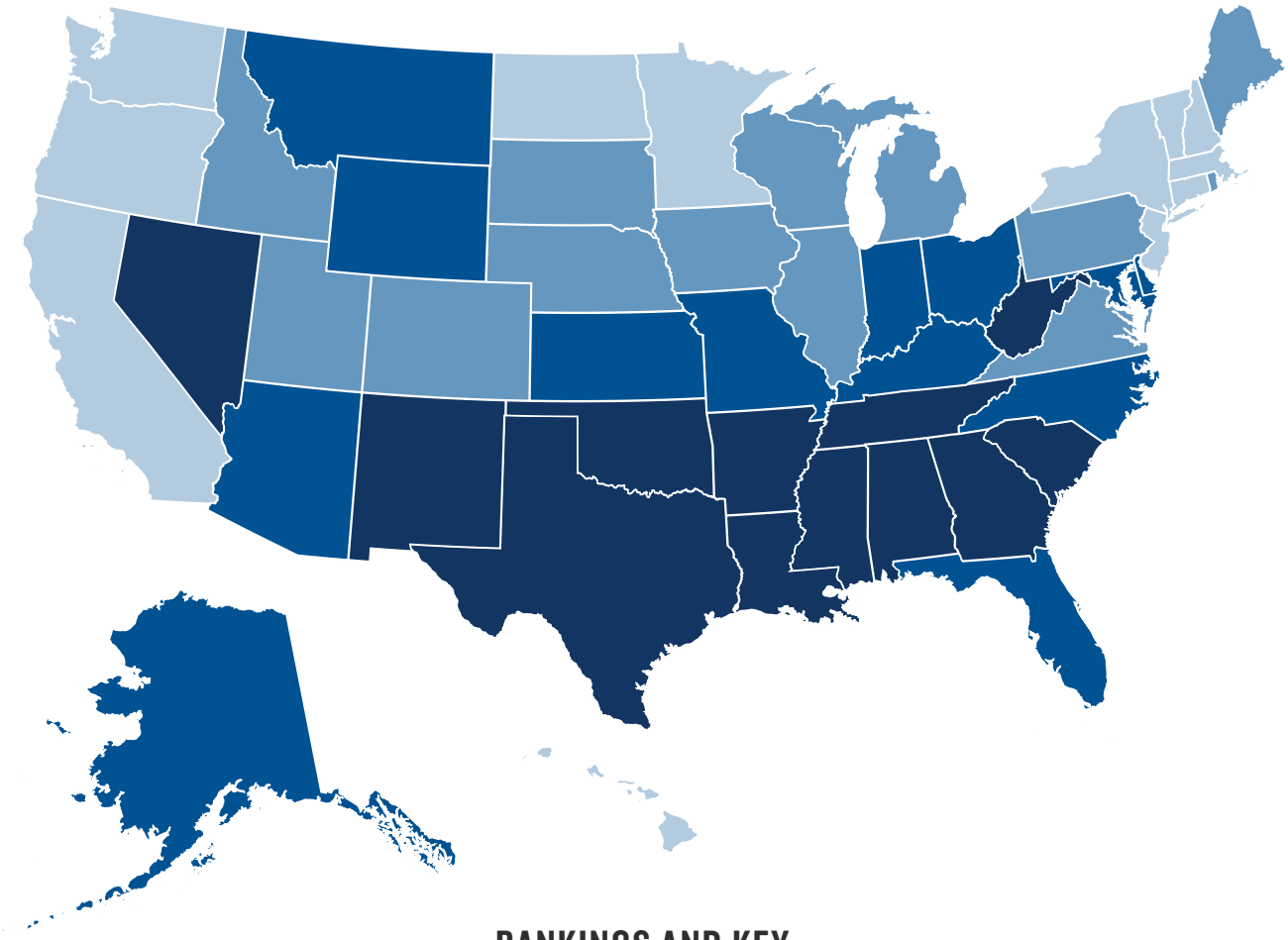
HEALTH

Indicators: low birth weight; health insurance coverage; child and teen deaths; youth obesity or overweight

Good health begins before birth, and experiences during childhood, particularly the first years of life, provide the underpinnings for future health and well-being. Many chronic diseases in adults have origins in childhood. While U.S. children's health has improved in some ways in recent decades, our country is facing a child health crisis, with high rates of chronic disease, mental illness and deaths from firearms, drug overdoses and suicides.[45] Efforts to address these issues begin by improving maternal health so babies are born healthy and by ensuring kids and youth have affordable, high-quality health insurance and care, including mental and behavioral health care. Setting kids on a path toward optimal health from the start — which can improve their educational attainment and their ability to become healthy, self-sufficient adults — has clear implications for the nation's future workforce and economy.

A 2025 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF

HEALTH



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. New Hampshire	13. Utah	26. Kansas	39. West Virginia
2. Massachusetts	14. Idaho	27. Delaware	40. Georgia
3. Vermont	15. Iowa	28. Maryland	41. Tennessee
4. Minnesota	16. Rhode Island	29. Montana	42. South Carolina
5. Connecticut	17. Nebraska	30. Indiana	43. Oklahoma
6. New Jersey	18. Virginia	31. Kentucky	44. Alabama
7. New York	19. Maine	32. Florida	45. Nevada
8. Oregon	20. Pennsylvania	33. Ohio	46. New Mexico
9. Washington	21. South Dakota	34. Alaska	47. Arkansas
10. Hawaii	22. Michigan	35. Missouri	48. Texas
11. California	23. Illinois	36. North Carolina	49. Louisiana
12. North Dakota	24. Colorado	37. Wyoming	50. Mississippi
	25. Wisconsin	38. Arizona	

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.

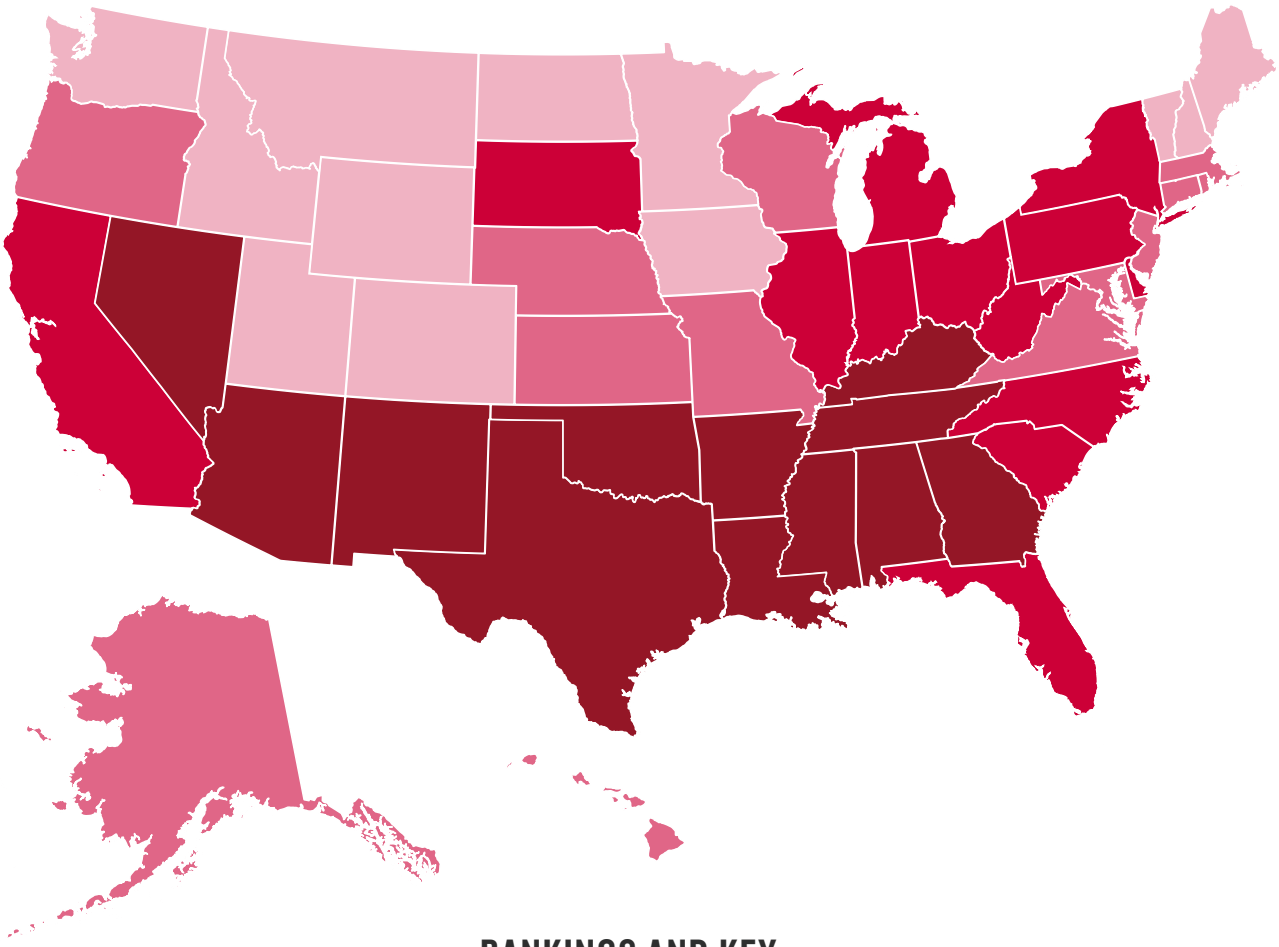
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Indicators: single-parent families; household heads lacking high school diplomas; high-poverty areas; teen births

Kids grow up in the context of families and communities, which powerfully shape their experiences and influence their development and life opportunities. Children are more likely to thrive when they have stable, nurturing relationships and environments — and adequate resources and sources of support. Some parents face greater risks of experiencing poverty and high stress, which can add parenting strain and limit access to resources to support their kids. Among those with increased chances of facing poverty include single parents, those lacking a high school diploma and teen parents. Children growing up in these circumstances, including living in high-poverty neighborhoods, are more likely to have reduced academic achievement and a host of adverse long-term outcomes. Though teen births are at historic lows, these young parents and their kids also commonly face unique life obstacles.[46] Efforts to strengthen children's lives benefit from including their families and communities, such as ensuring that parents and kids have safe neighborhoods with access to quality health care, education, healthy food, job opportunities and other services. These types of supportive environments enrich children's lives, relationships and chances for success.

A 2025 STATE-TO-STATE COMPARISON OF

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY



RANKINGS AND KEY

BEST	BETTER	WORSE	WORST
1. New Hampshire	13. Massachusetts	26. Illinois	39. Arizona
2. Utah	14. Hawaii	27. South Dakota	40. Oklahoma
3. Vermont	15. Nebraska	28. Pennsylvania	41. Kentucky
4. North Dakota	16. Rhode Island	29. Michigan	42. Georgia
5. Idaho	17. Wisconsin	30. Florida	43. Tennessee
6. Maine	18. Virginia	31. Indiana	44. Alabama
7. Minnesota	19. Oregon	32. West Virginia	45. Nevada
8. Wyoming	20. New Jersey	33. Delaware	46. Arkansas
9. Colorado	21. Alaska	34. North Carolina	47. Texas
10. Montana	22. Connecticut	35. Ohio	48. Mississippi
11. Washington	23. Maryland	36. South Carolina	49. Louisiana
12. Iowa	24. Kansas	37. California	50. New Mexico
	25. Missouri	38. New York	

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are not ranked.

ENDNOTES

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHILD WELL-BEING RANKINGS

Location	OVERALL RANK	ECONOMIC WELL-BEING RANK	EDUCATION RANK	HEALTH RANK	FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RANK
Alabama	43	36	38	44	44
Alaska	40	42	49	34	21
Arizona	42	31	47	38	39
Arkansas	45	45	36	47	46
California	32	44	30	11	37
Colorado	12	15	9	24	9
Connecticut	8	26	3	5	22
Delaware	30	17	37	27	33
District of Columbia	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.
Florida	35	43	19	32	30
Georgia	39	37	32	40	42
Hawaii	24	33	29	10	14
Idaho	15	19	40	14	5
Illinois	18	18	7	23	26
Indiana	25	11	11	30	31
Iowa	9	6	20	15	12
Kansas	14	5	24	26	24
Kentucky	36	34	25	31	41
Louisiana	49	50	35	49	49
Maine	17	16	41	19	6
Maryland	21	10	18	28	23
Massachusetts	3	25	1	2	13
Michigan	33	28	44	22	29
Minnesota	5	4	17	4	7
Mississippi	48	47	16	50	48
Missouri	27	13	33	35	25
Montana	22	21	26	29	10
Nebraska	10	3	21	17	15
Nevada	47	48	46	45	45
New Hampshire	1	2	4	1	1
New Jersey	7	23	2	6	20
New Mexico	50	49	50	46	50
New York	29	46	8	7	38
North Carolina	34	29	23	36	34
North Dakota	6	1	42	12	4
Ohio	31	27	15	33	35
Oklahoma	46	40	48	43	40
Oregon	28	32	43	8	19
Pennsylvania	20	22	10	20	28
Puerto Rico	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.
Rhode Island	19	24	28	16	16
South Carolina	38	38	34	42	36
South Dakota	26	14	39	21	27
Tennessee	37	35	14	41	43
Texas	44	41	31	48	47
Utah	4	9	5	13	2
Vermont	2	7	12	3	3
Virginia	13	12	13	18	18
Washington	16	30	27	9	11
West Virginia	41	39	45	39	32
Wisconsin	11	8	6	25	17
Wyoming	23	20	22	37	8

N.R.: Not ranked

APPENDIX B

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING INDICATORS

Location	Children in poverty (2023)		Children whose parents lack secure employment (2023)		Children living in households with a high housing cost burden (2023)		Teens not in school and not working (2023)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
United States	11,445,000	16	18,437,000	25	22,134,000	30	1,168,000	7
Alabama	235,000	21	324,000	29	282,000	25	19,000	7
Alaska	21,000	12	52,000	30	47,000	27	4,000	10
Arizona	239,000	15	387,000	24	452,000	29	33,000	8
Arkansas	144,000	21	194,000	28	168,000	24	17,000	10
California	1,241,000	15	2,378,000	28	3,461,000	41	138,000	7
Colorado	128,000	11	263,000	22	381,000	31	18,000	6
Connecticut	95,000	13	169,000	23	242,000	34	11,000	5
Delaware	32,000	15	54,000	26	51,000	24	3,000	5
District of Columbia	21,000	17	39,000	31	35,000	28	S	S
Florida	678,000	16	1,125,000	26	1,679,000	38	78,000	7
Georgia	461,000	18	669,000	26	777,000	31	45,000	7
Hawaii	33,000	11	82,000	28	104,000	35	4,000	7
Idaho	53,000	11	94,000	20	124,000	27	10,000	8
Illinois	390,000	15	654,000	24	705,000	26	36,000	5
Indiana	239,000	15	369,000	23	368,000	23	20,000	5
Iowa	97,000	14	142,000	20	144,000	20	8,000	5
Kansas	89,000	13	128,000	19	146,000	21	8,000	5
Kentucky	209,000	21	297,000	29	234,000	23	14,000	6
Louisiana	263,000	25	339,000	32	332,000	31	23,000	9
Maine	30,000	13	68,000	28	63,000	26	3,000	5
Maryland	142,000	11	273,000	20	400,000	29	19,000	6
Massachusetts	167,000	13	330,000	25	455,000	34	19,000	5
Michigan	365,000	18	552,000	26	520,000	25	34,000	7
Minnesota	130,000	10	250,000	19	299,000	23	13,000	4
Mississippi	154,000	23	209,000	31	166,000	25	15,000	8
Missouri	193,000	14	327,000	24	300,000	22	22,000	6
Montana	28,000	12	56,000	24	58,000	25	4,000	7
Nebraska	53,000	11	91,000	19	103,000	22	5,000	4
Nevada	108,000	16	189,000	28	249,000	36	15,000	9
New Hampshire	20,000	8	49,000	20	66,000	26	2,000	3
New Jersey	256,000	13	475,000	24	665,000	33	23,000	5
New Mexico	112,000	25	142,000	32	131,000	29	11,000	10
New York	718,000	19	1,135,000	29	1,482,000	38	61,000	6
North Carolina	403,000	18	583,000	25	629,000	27	38,000	7
North Dakota	15,000	9	30,000	17	27,000	15	2,000	4
Ohio	447,000	18	684,000	27	620,000	24	39,000	6
Oklahoma	198,000	21	253,000	26	256,000	27	19,000	8
Oregon	111,000	14	218,000	26	264,000	32	15,000	7
Pennsylvania	404,000	16	661,000	25	675,000	26	35,000	5
Puerto Rico	269,000	54	226,000	45	136,000	27	18,000	12
Rhode Island	27,000	13	57,000	28	63,000	31	2,000	4
South Carolina	215,000	19	308,000	27	299,000	26	23,000	8
South Dakota	31,000	15	49,000	23	50,000	23	4,000	7
Tennessee	303,000	20	444,000	28	410,000	26	23,000	6
Texas	1,372,000	18	1,849,000	25	2,497,000	33	135,000	8
Utah	88,000	9	165,000	18	234,000	25	16,000	7
Vermont	10,000	9	23,000	20	25,000	22	2,000	6
Virginia	234,000	13	407,000	22	525,000	28	26,000	6
Washington	198,000	12	419,000	25	506,000	31	28,000	8
West Virginia	69,000	20	104,000	30	67,000	19	8,000	9
Wisconsin	157,000	13	247,000	20	268,000	22	17,000	5
Wyoming	19,000	15	31,000	24	27,000	21	2,000	7

S: Data are suppressed due to low reliability.

EDUCATION INDICATORS

Location	Young children (ages 3 and 4) not in school (2019–23)		Fourth graders not proficient in reading (2024)		Eighth graders not proficient in math (2024)		High school students not graduating on time (2021–22)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
United States	4,317,000	54	N.A.	70	N.A.	73	N.A.	13
Alabama	73,000	57	N.A.	72	N.A.	82	N.A.	12
Alaska	12,000	61	N.A.	78	N.A.	78	N.A.	22
Arizona	111,000	64	N.A.	74	N.A.	74	N.A.	23
Arkansas	43,000	57	N.A.	72	N.A.	80	N.A.	12
California	520,000	56	N.A.	71	N.A.	75	N.A.	13
Colorado	67,000	51	N.A.	64	N.A.	68	N.A.	18
Connecticut	30,000	40	N.A.	64	N.A.	68	N.A.	11
Delaware	12,000	54	N.A.	74	N.A.	81	N.A.	12
District of Columbia	3,000	20	N.A.	70	N.A.	80	N.A.	24
Florida	241,000	51	N.A.	67	N.A.	79	N.A.	13
Georgia	142,000	52	N.A.	70	N.A.	76	N.A.	16
Hawaii	18,000	54	N.A.	68	N.A.	77	N.A.	14
Idaho	31,000	64	N.A.	68	N.A.	69	N.A.	20
Illinois	144,000	49	N.A.	70	N.A.	68	N.A.	13
Indiana	103,000	60	N.A.	66	N.A.	69	N.A.	12
Iowa	45,000	57	N.A.	71	N.A.	73	N.A.	10
Kansas	41,000	55	N.A.	72	N.A.	74	N.A.	11
Kentucky	71,000	63	N.A.	67	N.A.	76	N.A.	10
Louisiana	62,000	51	N.A.	68	N.A.	79	N.A.	17
Maine	16,000	60	N.A.	74	N.A.	75	N.A.	14
Maryland	82,000	54	N.A.	66	N.A.	75	N.A.	14
Massachusetts	64,000	44	N.A.	60	N.A.	63	N.A.	10
Michigan	129,000	56	N.A.	75	N.A.	76	N.A.	19
Minnesota	77,000	55	N.A.	69	N.A.	66	N.A.	16
Mississippi	37,000	50	N.A.	68	N.A.	78	N.A.	11
Missouri	84,000	57	N.A.	73	N.A.	77	N.A.	10
Montana	16,000	64	N.A.	68	N.A.	68	N.A.	14
Nebraska	30,000	57	N.A.	72	N.A.	68	N.A.	13
Nevada	50,000	67	N.A.	70	N.A.	80	N.A.	18
New Hampshire	13,000	48	N.A.	64	N.A.	68	N.A.	12
New Jersey	85,000	38	N.A.	62	N.A.	63	N.A.	15
New Mexico	29,000	60	N.A.	80	N.A.	86	N.A.	24
New York	189,000	41	N.A.	69	N.A.	74	N.A.	13
North Carolina	150,000	60	N.A.	70	N.A.	69	N.A.	14
North Dakota	15,000	72	N.A.	71	N.A.	71	N.A.	15
Ohio	162,000	57	N.A.	68	N.A.	68	N.A.	14
Oklahoma	61,000	59	N.A.	77	N.A.	83	N.A.	20
Oregon	52,000	58	N.A.	73	N.A.	76	N.A.	19
Pennsylvania	159,000	56	N.A.	67	N.A.	69	N.A.	13
Puerto Rico	20,000	42	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	>99.5	N.A.	26
Rhode Island	12,000	53	N.A.	67	N.A.	74	N.A.	17
South Carolina	67,000	56	N.A.	68	N.A.	76	N.A.	16
South Dakota	15,000	64	N.A.	72	N.A.	67	N.A.	18
Tennessee	104,000	62	N.A.	68	N.A.	69	N.A.	10
Texas	463,000	57	N.A.	72	N.A.	76	N.A.	10
Utah	56,000	57	N.A.	64	N.A.	65	N.A.	12
Vermont	5,000	41	N.A.	69	N.A.	71	N.A.	17
Virginia	108,000	54	N.A.	69	N.A.	71	N.A.	11
Washington	106,000	57	N.A.	68	N.A.	70	N.A.	16
West Virginia	25,000	71	N.A.	75	N.A.	82	N.A.	9
Wisconsin	80,000	59	N.A.	69	N.A.	63	N.A.	10
Wyoming	8,000	59	N.A.	64	N.A.	70	N.A.	18

N.A.: Not available

HEALTH INDICATORS

Location	Low birth-weight babies (2023)		Children without health insurance (2023)		Child and teen deaths per 100,000 (2023)		Children and teens (ages 10 to 17) who are overweight or obese (2022–23)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Rate	Number	Percent
United States	308,263	8.6	4,155,000	5	22,841	29	N.A.	31
Alabama	6,032	10.4	46,000	4	493	41	N.A.	36
Alaska	602	6.7	13,000	7	73	40	N.A.	33
Arizona	6,291	8.1	145,000	9	606	36	N.A.	30
Arkansas	3,399	9.6	50,000	7	300	40	N.A.	38
California	30,056	7.5	285,000	3	2,026	22	N.A.	31
Colorado	5,973	9.7	53,000	4	406	31	N.A.	26
Connecticut	2,732	7.9	27,000	3	137	17	N.A.	29
Delaware	954	9.2	11,000	5	57	25	N.A.	31
District of Columbia	855	10.8	2,000	1	72	52	N.A.	40
Florida	20,003	9.0	351,000	8	1,377	29	N.A.	28
Georgia	12,730	10.2	171,000	6	941	35	N.A.	30
Hawaii	1,290	8.7	9,000	3	55	18	N.A.	29
Idaho	1,550	6.9	33,000	7	156	31	N.A.	24
Illinois	11,071	8.9	93,000	3	868	30	N.A.	31
Indiana	6,787	8.6	98,000	6	573	34	N.A.	30
Iowa	2,742	7.6	26,000	3	202	26	N.A.	32
Kansas	2,604	7.6	41,000	6	265	36	N.A.	28
Kentucky	4,597	8.8	37,000	3	395	37	N.A.	33
Louisiana	6,176	11.3	48,000	4	539	48	N.A.	36
Maine	932	8.0	11,000	4	66	24	N.A.	31
Maryland	5,623	8.6	67,000	5	429	30	N.A.	31
Massachusetts	5,081	7.6	21,000	1	245	17	N.A.	26
Michigan	8,827	8.9	66,000	3	621	27	N.A.	32
Minnesota	4,439	7.2	46,000	3	346	25	N.A.	27
Mississippi	4,290	12.5	43,000	6	384	53	N.A.	42
Missouri	5,972	8.9	78,000	5	549	37	N.A.	31
Montana	855	7.7	17,000	7	96	38	N.A.	26
Nebraska	1,936	8.0	19,000	4	144	28	N.A.	29
Nevada	3,016	9.5	57,000	8	236	33	N.A.	35
New Hampshire	809	6.8	9,000	3	55	20	N.A.	22
New Jersey	7,875	7.8	88,000	4	396	19	N.A.	28
New Mexico	2,024	9.7	28,000	6	230	47	N.A.	33
New York	17,381	8.6	120,000	3	863	20	N.A.	28
North Carolina	11,297	9.4	129,000	5	878	35	N.A.	31
North Dakota	681	7.1	7,000	4	57	28	N.A.	28
Ohio	11,092	8.7	135,000	5	834	30	N.A.	35
Oklahoma	4,117	8.6	77,000	7	416	40	N.A.	34
Oregon	2,740	7.2	26,000	3	245	27	N.A.	29
Pennsylvania	10,703	8.4	147,000	5	675	24	N.A.	30
Puerto Rico	1,995	10.7	12,000	2	133	24	N.A.	N.A.
Rhode Island	753	7.7	7,000	3	53	23	N.A.	33
South Carolina	5,750	10.0	74,000	6	446	36	N.A.	34
South Dakota	807	7.2	16,000	7	84	36	N.A.	24
Tennessee	7,526	9.1	93,000	6	689	41	N.A.	33
Texas	33,329	8.6	943,000	12	2,373	30	N.A.	37
Utah	3,308	7.4	66,000	7	254	26	N.A.	25
Vermont	359	7.1	3,000	2	30	23	N.A.	25
Virginia	7,812	8.4	92,000	5	562	28	N.A.	26
Washington	5,633	7.0	58,000	3	497	29	N.A.	29
West Virginia	1,628	9.8	11,000	3	108	29	N.A.	42
Wisconsin	4,685	7.8	54,000	4	391	29	N.A.	34
Wyoming	539	9.0	10,000	7	48	34	N.A.	29

N.A.: Not available

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INDICATORS

Location	Children in single-parent families (2023)		Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma (2023)		Children living in high-poverty areas (2019–23)		Teen births per 1,000 (2023)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Rate
United States	23,531,000	34	7,998,000	11	5,546,000	8	140,977	13
Alabama	408,000	39	101,000	9	125,000	11	3,417	20
Alaska	53,000	32	8,000	5	11,000	6	342	16
Arizona	542,000	36	195,000	12	132,000	8	3,461	14
Arkansas	239,000	37	65,000	9	68,000	10	2,436	24
California	2,772,000	34	1,470,000	17	464,000	5	11,578	9
Colorado	329,000	28	96,000	8	15,000	1	1,999	11
Connecticut	239,000	34	62,000	9	53,000	7	799	7
Delaware	81,000	41	22,000	11	7,000	3	444	13
District of Columbia	56,000	47	12,000	9	19,000	15	243	12
Florida	1,523,000	37	440,000	10	256,000	6	8,108	13
Georgia	899,000	38	292,000	12	225,000	9	6,259	17
Hawaii	92,000	34	18,000	6	11,000	4	423	11
Idaho	107,000	24	35,000	7	4,000	1	800	10
Illinois	890,000	35	256,000	9	177,000	6	4,324	11
Indiana	489,000	33	159,000	10	114,000	7	3,605	16
Iowa	201,000	29	57,000	8	22,000	3	1,299	12
Kansas	191,000	29	61,000	9	39,000	6	1,536	15
Kentucky	336,000	36	87,000	9	112,000	11	2,976	21
Louisiana	445,000	45	110,000	10	220,000	20	3,490	23
Maine	76,000	32	10,000	4	5,000	2	283	7
Maryland	444,000	34	133,000	10	49,000	4	2,105	11
Massachusetts	419,000	33	116,000	9	66,000	5	1,311	6
Michigan	683,000	34	167,000	8	228,000	11	3,418	11
Minnesota	339,000	27	89,000	7	40,000	3	1,465	8
Mississippi	277,000	44	64,000	10	138,000	20	2,596	25
Missouri	409,000	32	103,000	8	80,000	6	3,166	16
Montana	62,000	28	13,000	6	14,000	6	398	12
Nebraska	129,000	28	39,000	8	19,000	4	896	13
Nevada	262,000	40	111,000	16	40,000	6	1,248	13
New Hampshire	64,000	27	9,000	4	2,000	1	186	5
New Jersey	600,000	31	191,000	10	136,000	7	2,153	8
New Mexico	189,000	45	72,000	16	89,000	19	1,267	18
New York	1,320,000	35	509,000	13	547,000	13	5,000	9
North Carolina	767,000	35	252,000	11	164,000	7	5,238	15
North Dakota	39,000	23	8,000	4	4,000	2	299	11
Ohio	875,000	36	232,000	9	257,000	10	5,478	15
Oklahoma	307,000	34	108,000	11	84,000	9	2,855	21
Oregon	267,000	34	81,000	10	19,000	2	1,172	9
Pennsylvania	874,000	35	235,000	9	203,000	8	4,077	10
Puerto Rico	307,000	64	43,000	9	433,000	80	1,133	12
Rhode Island	67,000	35	17,000	8	7,000	3	271	7
South Carolina	394,000	37	101,000	9	97,000	9	2,965	17
South Dakota	63,000	30	16,000	7	18,000	8	506	17
Tennessee	515,000	35	170,000	11	135,000	9	4,547	20
Texas	2,458,000	34	1,106,000	15	827,000	11	20,856	19
Utah	175,000	19	54,000	6	7,000	1	1,202	9
Vermont	30,000	27	3,000	3	1,000	1	116	6
Virginia	558,000	31	154,000	8	71,000	4	3,037	11
Washington	449,000	29	157,000	10	30,000	2	2,226	10
West Virginia	111,000	34	28,000	8	30,000	8	973	18
Wisconsin	382,000	32	95,000	8	64,000	5	1,882	10
Wyoming	36,000	30	7,000	5	1,000	1	246	13

ABOUT THE KIDS COUNT INDEX

The KIDS COUNT index reflects child health and educational outcomes as well as influential factors, such as economic well-being, family structure and community context. The index incorporates a developmental perspective on childhood and includes experiences across life stages, from birth through early adulthood. The indicators are consistently and regularly measured, which allows for legitimate comparisons across states and over time.

Organizing the index into domains provides a more nuanced assessment of child well-being in each state that can inform policy solutions by helping policymakers and advocates better identify areas of strength and weakness. For example, a state may rank well above average in overall child well-being, while showing the need for improvement in one or more domains. Domain-specific data can strengthen decision-making efforts by providing multiple data points relevant to specific policy areas.

The 16 indicators of child well-being are derived from federal government statistical agencies and reflect the best available state and national data for tracking yearly changes. Many of the indicators are based on samples, and, like all sample data, they contain some random error. Other measures (such as the child and teen death rate) are based on relatively small numbers of events in some states and may exhibit some random fluctuation from year to year.

The Foundation urges readers to focus on relatively large differences across states, as small differences may simply reflect small fluctuations, rather than real changes in the well-being of children. Assessing trends by looking at changes over a longer period is more reliable. State data for past years are available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center at **datacenter.aecf.org**.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses rates and percentages because they are the best way to compare states and to assess changes over time within a state. However, the focus on rates and percentages may mask the magnitude of some of the problems examined in this report. Therefore, data on the actual number of children or events are provided on pages 30–33 and in the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

The Foundation includes data for the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico in the appendices, but not in the state rankings because they are significantly different from states, and comparisons are not instructive. It is more useful to look at changes for these geographies over time or to compare the District of Columbia with other large cities. Data for many child well-being indicators for the 50 largest cities (including the District of Columbia) are available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center, which also contains statistics for children and families in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

DEFINITIONS AND DATA SOURCES

DEFINITIONS

Domain rank for each state was determined in the following manner. First, the Foundation converted the state numerical values for the most recent year for each of the four key indicators within every domain into standard scores. It summed those standard scores in each domain to get a total standard score for each state. Finally, Casey ranked the states based on their total standard score by domain in sequential order from highest/best (1) to lowest/worst (50). Standard scores were derived by subtracting the mean score from the observed score and dividing the amount by the standard deviation for that distribution of scores. All measures were given the same weight in calculating the domain standard score.

Overall rank for each state was calculated in the following manner. First, Casey converted the state numerical values for the most recent year for all 16 key indicators into standard scores. It summed those standard scores within their domains to create a domain standard score for each state. The Foundation then summed the four domain standard scores to get a total standard score for every state. Finally, it ranked the states based on their total standard score in sequential order from highest/best (1) to lowest/worst (50). Standard scores were derived by subtracting the mean score from the observed score and dividing the amount by the standard deviation for that distribution of scores. All measures were given the same weight in calculating the total standard score.

Percentage change over time analysis was computed by comparing the most recent year's data for the 16 key indicators with the data for the base year. To calculate percentage change, the Foundation subtracted the rate for the most recent year from the rate for the base year and then divided that quantity by the rate for the base year. The results are multiplied by 100 for readability. The percentage change was calculated on rounded data, and the percentage-change figure has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING INDICATORS

Children in poverty is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below 100% of the U.S. poverty threshold, as defined each year by the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2023, a family of two adults and two children lived in poverty if the family's annual income fell below $30,900. Poverty status is not determined for people living in group quarters (such as military barracks, prisons and other institutional settings) or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as children in foster care). The data are based on income received in the 12 months prior to the survey. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Children whose parents lack secure employment is the share of all children under age 18 who live in families where no parent has regular, full-time, year-round employment. For children in single-parent families, this means the resident parent did not work at least 35 hours per week for at least 50 weeks in the 12 months prior to the survey. For children living in married-couple families, this means neither parent worked at least 35 hours per week for at least 50 weeks in the 12 months before the survey. Children who live with neither parent are also listed as not having secure parental employment because they are likely to be economically vulnerable. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Children living in households with a high housing cost burden is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in households where more than 30% of monthly household pretax income is spent on housing-related expenses, including rent, mortgage payments, taxes and insurance. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Teens not in school and not working is the percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school (full or part time) and not employed (full or part time). *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

EDUCATION INDICATORS

Young children not in school is the percentage of children ages 3 and 4 who were not enrolled in school (e.g., nursery school, preschool or kindergarten) during the previous three months. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Fourth graders not proficient in reading is the percentage of fourth grade public school students who did not reach the proficient level in reading as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For this indicator, public schools include charter schools and exclude Bureau of Indian Education and Department of Defense Education Activity schools. *SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.*

Eighth graders not proficient in math is the percentage of eighth grade public school students who did not reach the proficient level in math as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For this indicator, public schools include charter schools and exclude Bureau of Indian Education and Department of Defense Education Activity schools. *SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.*

High school students not graduating on time is the percentage of an entering freshman class not graduating in four years. The measure is derived from the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). The four-year ACGR is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. Students who enter ninth grade for the first time form a cohort that is adjusted by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort and subtracting any students who transfer out. *SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.*

HEALTH INDICATORS

Low birth-weight babies is the percentage of live births weighing less than 5.5 pounds (2,500 grams). The data reflect the mother's place of residence, not the place where the birth occurred. *SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics.*

Children without health insurance is the percentage of children under age 19 not covered by any health insurance. The data are based on health insurance coverage at the time of the survey; interviews are conducted throughout the calendar year. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Child and teen deaths per 100,000 is the number of deaths, from all causes, of children between ages 1 and 19 per 100,000 children in this age range. The data are reported by the place of residence, not the place where the death occurred. *SOURCES:* ***Death statistics:*** *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics.* ***Population statistics:*** *U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates.*

Children and teens who are overweight or obese is the percentage of children and teens ages 10 to 17 with a Body Mass Index (BMI)-for-age at or above the 85th percentile. The data are based on a two-year average of survey responses. *SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Survey of Children's Health.*

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INDICATORS

Children in single-parent families is the percentage of children under age 18 who live with their single parent in a family. Children not living with a parent are excluded. In this definition, single-parent families include cohabiting couples. Children who live with married stepparents are not considered to be in a single-parent family. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in households where the head of the household does not have a high school diploma or equivalent. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Children living in high-poverty areas is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in census tracts where the poverty rates of the total population are 30% or more. In 2023, a family of two adults and two children lived in poverty if the family's annual income fell below $30,900. The data are based on income received in the 12 months prior to the survey. *SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.*

Teen births per 1,000 is the number of births to teenagers ages 15 to 19 per 1,000 females in this age group. Data reflect the mother's place of residence, not the place where the birth occurred. *SOURCES: **Birth statistics:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics. **Population statistics:** U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates.*

STATE KIDS COUNT ORGANIZATIONS

ALABAMA
VOICES for Alabama's Children
alavoices.org
334.213.2410

ALASKA
Alaska Children's Trust
www.alaskachildrenstrust.org
907.248.7676

ARIZONA
Children's Action Alliance
azchildren.org
602.266.0707

ARKANSAS
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
www.aradvocates.org
501.371.9678

CALIFORNIA
Children Now (CA)
www.childrennow.org
510.763.2444

COLORADO
Colorado Children's Campaign
www.coloradokids.org
303.839.1580

CONNECTICUT
Connecticut Voices for Children
ctvoices.org
203.498.4240

DELAWARE
University of Delaware
dekidscount.org
302.831.3462

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC Action
wearedcaction.org
202.234.9404

FLORIDA
Florida Policy Institute
www.floridapolicy.org
407.440.1421 ext. 709

GEORGIA
Georgia Family Connection Partnership
gafcp.org
404.527.7394

HAWAII
Hawaii Children's Action Network
www.hawaii-can.org
808.531.5502

IDAHO
Idaho Voices for Children
www.idahovoices.org
208.693.8580

ILLINOIS
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
ywcachicago.org
312.372.6600

INDIANA
Indiana Youth Institute
iyi.org
317.396.2700

IOWA
Common Good Iowa
www.commongoodiowa.org
515.280.9027

KANSAS
Kansas Action for Children
www.kac.org
785.232.0550

KENTUCKY
Kentucky Youth Advocates
kyyouth.org
502.895.8167

LOUISIANA
Agenda for Children
agendaforchildren.org
504.586.8509

MAINE
Maine Children's Alliance
mainechildrensalliance.org
207.623.1868

MARYLAND
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
www.mdeconomy.org
410.412.9105

MASSACHUSETTS
Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center
massbudget.org
617.426.1228

MICHIGAN
Michigan League for Public Policy
mlpp.org
517.487.5436

MINNESOTA
Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota
www.childrensdefense.org/cdf-in-the-states/minnesota
651.227.6121

MISSISSIPPI
Children's Foundation of Mississippi
childrensfoundationms.org
601.982.9050

MISSOURI
Family and Community Trust
www.mokidscount.org
573.636.6300

MONTANA
Montana Budget & Policy Center
montanabudget.org
406.422.5848

NEBRASKA
Voices for Children in Nebraska
voicesforchildren.com
402.597.3100

NEVADA
Children's Advocacy Alliance
www.caanv.org
702.228.1869

NEW HAMPSHIRE
New Futures
new-futures.org
603.225.9540

NEW JERSEY
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
acnj.org
973.643.3876

NEW MEXICO
New Mexico Voices for Children
www.nmvoices.org
505.244.9505

NEW YORK
New York State Council on Children and Families
www.ccf.ny.gov
518.473.3652

NORTH CAROLINA
NC Child
ncchild.org
919.834.6623

NORTH DAKOTA
Montana Budget & Policy Center
ndkidscount.org
406.422.5848

OHIO
Children's Defense Fund-Ohio
cdfohio.org
614.221.2244

OKLAHOMA
Oklahoma Policy Institute
okpolicy.org
918.794.3944

OREGON
Our Children Oregon
ourchildrenoregon.org
503.236.9754

PENNSYLVANIA
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
www.papartnerships.org
717.236.5680

PUERTO RICO
Youth Development Institute (Instituto del Desarrollo de la Juventud)
www.juventudpr.org
787.931.7229

RHODE ISLAND
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
www.rikidscount.org
401.351.9400

SOUTH CAROLINA
Children's Trust of South Carolina
scchildren.org
803.733.5430

SOUTH DAKOTA
Montana Budget & Policy Center
sdkidscount.org
406.422.5848

TENNESSEE
The Sycamore Institute
www.sycamoretn.org
615.680.0047

TEXAS
Every Texan
everytexan.org/kids-count
512.320.0222

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
St. Croix Foundation for Community Development
stxfoundation.org
340.773.9898

UTAH
Voices for Utah Children
www.utahchildren.org
801.364.1182

VERMONT
Voices for Vermont's Children
www.voicesforvtkids.org
802.229.6377

VIRGINIA
Voices for Virginia's Children
vakids.org
804.649.0184

WASHINGTON
Children's Alliance
www.childrensalliance.org
206.324.0340

WEST VIRGINIA
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy
wvpolicy.org
304.720.8682

WISCONSIN
Kids Forward
kidsforward.org
608.285.2314

WYOMING
Wyoming Community Foundation
wycf.org/wycountkids
307.721.8300

ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children and youth 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.

KIDS COUNT (LA INFANCIA CUENTA™) is the Foundation's national and state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and advocates with benchmarks of child and young adult well-being, the Foundation seeks to enrich local, state and national discussions concerning ways to enable all kids and youth to succeed.

Nationally, the Foundation produces publications on key areas of well-being, including the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book, Race for Results*® and periodic reports on critical child and family policy and practice issues. In addition, through its Thrive by 25® briefs, it reports on the needs of young people ages 14 through 24. All the Foundation's lessons are available at **www.aecf.org/publications**.

The Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Center — at **datacenter.aecf.org** — provides the best available data on child well-being in the United States. Additionally, the Foundation funds the KIDS COUNT Network — which counts members serving every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands — to provide a more detailed, local picture of how children are faring.

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THE ANNIE E. CASEY
FOUNDATION

Our big ideas are building a brighter future
for America's children, youth and families.

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