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National *KIDS COUNT Data Book* on the status of American children released

25th edition of *KIDS COUNT Data Book* highlights national improvements in health, safety, education and decline in teen birth rate since 1990

Rhode Island continues to be ranked 26th in the nation for overall child well-being

Providence, RI (July 22, 2014) – The 25th edition *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a state-by-state report on children’s well-being issued by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, finds that Rhode Island ranks 26th in the nation for overall child well-being (1st is the best and 50th is the worst). Rhode Island ranked last in New England, following Massachusetts (1), Vermont (2), New Hampshire (4), Connecticut (7) and Maine (14).

The 2014 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* provides a comprehensive portrait of how children are faring in the U.S. as a whole and in each of the 50 states. The *Data Book* and state-by-state rankings will be available at 12:01 a.m. EDT, July 22, 2014 on the Casey Foundation [website](http://www.aecf.org). Supplemental data will be available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org. Data Center users can create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and view real-time information on mobile devices.

According to the 2014 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, there were improvements nationwide in many indicators in the health, education and safety areas:

- More children have access to health insurance coverage than before the recession,
- Preschool attendance and high school graduation showed steady improvements, and
- Child and teen mortality and teen substance abuse rates have fallen.

Economic progress still lags across the country, even after the end of the recession. Since 1990, there has been an increase in the child poverty rate, as well as the percentage of children growing up in poor communities.

“On several fronts, we’ve seen the difference that smart policies, effective programs and high-quality practice can make in improving child well-being and long-term outcomes,” said Patrick McCarthy, the Foundation’s president and CEO. “We should

all be encouraged by the improvements in many well-being indicators in the health, education, and safety areas. But we must do much more,” he added. “We should strengthen our commitment and redouble our efforts until every child in America develops to full potential.”

Rhode Island’s national rankings for child well-being

State rankings are based on an index of 16 indicators in four key areas. While Rhode Island ranks 26th in the nation for overall child well-being (the same ranking as 2013), rankings were also issued for the four key areas:

- *Health:* Rhode Island ranks 15th (a decrease from 5th in 2013, despite improvements in 3 out of 4 indicators)
- *Education:* Rhode Island ranks 25th (a decrease from 24th in 2013)
- *Economic Well-Being:* Rhode Island ranks 26th (an increase from 31st in 2013)
- *Family and Community:* Rhode Island ranks 32nd (the same from 2013)

Indicators of child well-being in Rhode Island

There were several indicators on which Rhode Island improved.

Rhode Island has low rates of uninsured children (Health)

- In Rhode Island in 2012, 5 percent of children did not have health insurance, compared to 6 percent without health insurance in 2008. Rhode Island is ranked 14th best in the nation for this indicator.

“The fact that more children have health insurance demonstrates Rhode Island’s commitment to children’s well-being,” stated Elizabeth Burke Bryant, executive director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “By covering our most vulnerable children and their families through Rite Care, Rhode Island has continued to make the health and well-being of our future generation a priority.”

Decrease in Children in Families without a High School Diploma (Family and Community)

- In 2012, 13 percent of Rhode Island children lived in families where the household head lacks a diploma; a decrease from 16 percent in 2005. Despite this improvement, Rhode Island is ranked 29th in the nation for this indicator.

Improvements in Reading and Math Skills (Education)

- The percentage of fourth graders in Rhode Island not proficient in reading decreased, from 70 percent in 2005 to 62 percent in 2013. Rhode Island is ranked 13th best in the nation for this indicator.
- The percentage of eighth graders not proficient in math decreased, from 76 percent in 2005 to 64 percent in 2013. Rhode Island is ranked 22nd in the nation for this indicator.

- *Please note that these indicators are measured by the percentage of students not proficient in reading and math. A decrease in this percentage is an improvement; since this means that more students are proficient in reading and math.*

Despite gains in several health and education indicators, the percentage of Rhode Island children whose parents lack secure employment increased.

Increase in Children Living in Families without Full-Time Parental Employment (Economic Well-Being)

- In 2012, 33 percent of children in Rhode Island were living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment; an increase from 30 percent of children in 2008. Rhode Island is ranked 31st in the nation for this indicator.

“The fact that more Rhode Island children are living in families without a full-time employed parent shows that the negative economic impacts of the recession continue to be felt among Rhode Island families,” said Burke Bryant. “Rhode Island must work toward ensuring that parents have strong job skills for stable, good-paying jobs, while at the same time increasing access to high-quality education for all children so they will have the education and skills to compete when they are adults.”

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, education, safety, and development of Rhode Island’s children and youth. It is one of fifty state-level organizations that work in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to track the social condition of children at the state and local level across the country.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation’s children 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.