



**UNDER EMBARGO until Wednesday, June 27, at 12:01 a.m. ET**

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## **Thousands of Young Children in Colorado at Risk of Not Being Counted in 2020 Census**

*National report that ranks Colorado 20<sup>th</sup> in child well-being also spotlights that census undercount could cost Colorado billions in federal funding, undercut representation and drive policymaking for years to come*

DENVER—One in five of Colorado’s youngest children is at risk of not being counted in the 2020 census, according to a new report released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. As many as 62,000 Colorado children under 5 live in communities that are considered hard to count. Without efforts to ensure all Colorado children are counted in the 2020 census, kids will be deprived of investment and representation during their critical early years, according to the *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*.

An undercount of young children in the upcoming decennial census would shortchange child well-being over the next decade by putting at risk hundreds of millions of dollars of federal funding for programs that are critical to family stability and opportunity, the report said.

“All people—including children—have the right to be counted and be represented in our democracy. But with no real political or economic power, young children rely on adults to protect and advocate for them,” said Kelly Causey, President and CEO of the Colorado Children’s Campaign. “For kids to count, the nation must count them in the census. It is up to every policy maker, every community and the nation to do right by our kids: to make sure that children are counted and considered national priorities.”

Roughly 300 federal programs use census-derived data to allocate more than \$800 billion a year nationally. Among just the top 10 programs that support children alone, Colorado receives more than \$2 billion in federal funding. These programs rely on data to help remove barriers to opportunity for children and families. However, census outreach efforts face daunting challenges: a lack of leadership, the first-ever digital survey and the potential of suppressed participation due to an untested citizenship question.

The undercount of young children has worsened with every census since 1980. The 2010 survey had the worst undercount since 1950, with nearly 5 percent of young children—about 1 million kids—not counted. If missed in the national count, children of color, low-income children and children in immigrant families stand to suffer the most if vital programs face reductions in funding. Research shows that by 2020 the majority of children in the United States will be children of color.

In addition to highlighting the importance of the 2020 census, this year’s *Data Book* from the Casey Foundation uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains—health, education, economic well-being and family and community—as an assessment of child well-being.

Colorado ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in the nation for overall child well-being in the *Data Book*. This year's rankings and last year's are not directly comparable because of changes in methodology and data sources, but the current ranking illuminates Colorado's consistent struggle to rise out of the middle of the pack.

"Our average ranking hides deeper issues in Colorado," Causey said. "When we look further, we see that child well-being outcomes are starkly different depending on a child's race and family income. Colorado children of color are far more likely to encounter barriers to health and education. Policies and practices of the past—and many that continue today—have limited opportunity for children of color."

In this year's *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, Colorado ranked:

- **16<sup>th</sup> in economic well-being in 2018.** Colorado's child poverty rate has fallen significantly since 2010, dropping from 17 percent to 13 percent in 2016. However, the state still ranks in the bottom half of states for the percentage of kids in families who are burdened by housing costs. Nearly one in three Colorado kids (31 percent) lived in a family that spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing in 2016.
- **17<sup>th</sup> in education** because of high rates of preschool enrollment relative to other states and higher than average scores on nationwide assessments. On average, between 2014 and 2016, 49 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in Colorado were not attending preschool, better than the national average of 52 percent.
- **42<sup>nd</sup> for child health in 2018.** Despite historic gains in kids' health coverage since 2010, Colorado's high rates of low-weight births and teen drug and alcohol abuse contribute to its low overall health ranking. In 2016, 9 percent of Colorado babies were born at a low birthweight, higher than the national average of 8.2 percent. Seven percent of Colorado teens abused alcohol or drugs, compared with 5 percent of teens across the U.S.
- **17<sup>th</sup> for indicators of family and community well-being.** Since 2010, Colorado improved on all four indicators included in this domain: children living in single-parent families, children living in high-poverty neighborhoods, teen births and and children living in a household where the household head does not have a high school diploma.

#### **Release Information**

The *2018 KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available June 27 at 12:01 a.m. ET at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://www.aecf.org/databook), which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the Data Book can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org).

The **Colorado Children's Campaign** is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization committed since 1985 to realizing every chance for every child in Colorado. We advocate for the development and implementation of data-driven public policies that improve child well-being in health, education and early childhood. We do this by providing Coloradans with trusted data and research on child well-being and organizing an extensive state-wide network of dedicated child advocates. For more information, please visit [www.coloradokids.org](http://www.coloradokids.org).

#### **About the Annie E. Casey Foundation**

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](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.