

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Nebraska Ranks Ninth in Latest National Rankings for Child Well-Being**

*2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book shows state has continued strong level of economic well-being for families and kids, but shows room for improvement in health and family and community measures*

**OMAHA, Nebraska**—Nebraska continues to be a great place to be a kid. However, the *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, shows that while the state shows improvements in many areas and ranks high in economic well-being, it has some challenges when it comes to factors related to family and community.

The state ranks ninth in the nation in overall child well-being, according to the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, which 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. Below are the rankings in each domain:

- **#2 in economic well-being.** Nebraska families continue to show extremely high rates of employment among both parents and teens.
- **#8 in education.** Nebraska has one of the nation's highest rates of high-school students graduating on time at 89 percent.
- **#21 in family and community.** About 8 percent of Nebraska children live in high-poverty areas.
- **#12 in health.** The number of Nebraska children without health insurance has not changed in the past four years. While this is a great improvement and an all-time low, Nebraska's child insurance rate improvements have not kept pace with other states, with 32 states having better insurance rates.

The *2018 Data Book* shows that a stronger national economy is producing more positive outcomes for families. In Nebraska there are 16,000 fewer kids living in poverty in 2016 than in 2010, more parents are employed, and fewer families are spending a disproportionate amount of their income on housing costs. Despite gains for children of all races and income levels during the economic recovery, inequities remain persistent among children of color. On nearly all the measures that *KIDS COUNT* tracks, African-American, American Indian, Latino, and Southeast Asian children fare worse than their white peers.

With the 2020 U.S. census fast approaching, Nebraska faces a potential undercount of its young children. The undercount of young children has increased every decade since the 1980s, and the 2020 census faces daunting challenges in capturing the true number of Nebraska's youngest. An estimated 1.9 percent of 0-4-year-old Nebraskans were not counted in the 2010 census.

"Based on changes to the upcoming census we can expect the rate of undercounted children in Nebraska to grow," said Chrissy Tonkinson, research coordinator at Voices for Children in Nebraska. "Missed children, especially those of color, low-income, and/or children of immigrant families stand to suffer the most if vital programs face reductions in funding."

Since children cannot vote or complete a census form, they must depend on adults to ensure they are represented, prioritize their futures and fight for their well-being. All state and local officials must engage their partners to devise solutions to reach hard-to-count households and increase participation in the 2020 census,

such as providing access to online connections for families to bridge the digital divide and enlisting trusted community partners to help in educational outreach. Federal legislators need to continue allocating sufficient funds to support a more accurate census than we had in 2010.

“We will count on children of all races and ethnicities to build America’s future, so the country must count all children in this upcoming census, so we can direct funding to meet their needs,” said Patrick McCarthy, President and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “It’s not too late to ensure we conduct a census that leads to proper funding, representation and programs for the continued healthy development of kids. But it’s up to policymakers, communities and the nation to make sure that every kid is counted and matters.”

#### **Release Information**

The *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* will be available June 27 at 12:01 a.m. EDT 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).

#### **About Voices for Children in Nebraska**

Voices for Children in Nebraska is the independent voice building pathways to opportunity for all children and families through research, policy, and community engagement. For more information, call Voices for Children in Nebraska, visit [www.voicesforchildren.com](http://www.voicesforchildren.com).

#### **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.

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