



**UNDER EMBARGO Until Monday, June 17 at 12:01 a.m. ET**  
 Contact: Bill Byrnes | bbyrnes@voices4kids.org | 312-516-5566

**Illinois Improves on Most Key Indicators of Child Well-Being, But Significant Racial and Ethnic Disparities Persist**

*30th KIDS COUNT® Data Book emphasizes Illinois’ successes, but also highlights current and future challenges*

**CHICAGO** — The 2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book, released today, shows large, continuing disparities in well-being among Illinois children.

Every year, the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s report collects and analyzes data on children in the areas of economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. The Data Book then compares results among the states.

STATE	YEAR OF DATA BOOK	ECONOMIC WELL-BEING RANK	EDUCATION RANK	HEALTH RANK	FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT RANK	OVERALL RANK
Illinois	2019	27	12	27	27	23
Illinois	2018	27	13	24	27	22

Illinois’ place among all 50 states has not changed much since last year. However, within each of the broader categories are some specific, troubling indicators concerning racial and ethnic disparities.

- Overall, the child poverty rate in Illinois remained unchanged from 1990 to 2017, at 17 percent. However, in 2017 black children live in poverty at a rate of 37 percent, while Latinx children experienced a poverty rate of 20 percent and white children had a poverty rate of 10 percent.
- Black children’s mortality and low birth weight rates were much higher than any other racial/ethnic group in Illinois. The mortality rate among black children is 55 per 100,000, which is significantly higher than the state rate of 29 per 100,000; all other racial/ethnic groups’ mortality rates were less than the state rate. The rate of low-weight births was also highest among black babies at 14.2 percent; the next highest group was Asian babies at a rate of 9.5 percent. No other group exceeded the state rate of 8.5 percent.
- 89 percent of black eighth graders in Illinois scored below the math proficiency level in 2017, compared to 79 percent of Latinx eighth graders and 58 percent of white eighth graders.
- Latinx children live in households where the household head lacks a high school diploma at nearly three times the state rate, the highest of any racial/ethnic group in Illinois.

Addressing racial and ethnic disparities in Illinois is of particular importance, especially considering the significant demographic shifts that have taken place throughout the state. From 1990 to 2017, the Latinx child population in Illinois more than doubled from 331,000 to 718,000,

according to this year's *Data Book*. At the same time, Illinois' population of white children declined by over 441,000, while the population of black children declined by over 71,000.

"An Illinois child can have quite a different experience depending on his or her race or ethnicity," said Tasha Green Cruzat, president of Voices for Illinois Children. "We need to ensure every child is on the path to success. When that happens, we all succeed."

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* also reflects the persistence of racial and ethnic disparities nationally. In addition, it shows more than 13 million U.S. children live in poverty.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* also shows how essential accurate data is to sound policymaking. Nationally, the 2010 census missed 2.2 million children under the age of 5. The stakes are high: 55 major federal programs, including Head Start and the Children's Health Insurance Program, allocate more than \$880 billion each year based on census data.

The Casey Foundation calls on elected officials and representatives to:

- *Expand the programs that make and keep kids healthy.* For the sake of all children, regardless of their immigration status, Illinois should increase Medicaid reimbursement rates so that children can more easily access the medical care they need.
- *Provide the tools proven to help families lift themselves up economically.* Federal and state earned income tax credits (EITC) and child tax credit programs mean working parents can use more of their take-home pay to meet their children's needs.
- *Address ethnic and racial inequities.* The national averages of child well-being can mask the reality that black and brown children still face a greater number of obstacles.
- *Count all kids.* Ensure the 2020 census counts all children, especially those under 5 years old and from hard-to-count areas.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the 30th edition of an annual data study that is based on U.S. Census and other publicly available data, representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

### **Release Information**

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available June 17 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). 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 Illinois Children**

Voices for Illinois Children champions the full development of every child in Illinois to assure the future well-being of everyone in the state. We work with families, communities and policymakers across multiple issue areas to help children grow up healthy, happy, safe, loved and well-educated. For more information, visit [www.voices4kids.org](http://www.voices4kids.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).