

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**UNDER EMBARGO Until Monday, June 17 at 12:01 a.m. ET**

**Nebraska's Child Population of Color Triples Since 1990; State Gains Ground in Health, Education**

*National KIDS COUNT® Data Book Ranks Nebraska 12th Nationally in Most Comprehensive Report on Child Well-Being in United States*

**OMAHA, Nebraska** — Nebraska is now home to nearly 100,000 more children of color than in 1990, a number that is expected to continue to grow. With this rapid population change, greater investments must be made to remove barriers to opportunity for all children.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* — the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States — notes measurable progress since the first *Data Book*, published in 1990. Nevertheless, 66,000 Nebraska children remain in poverty, and serious racial and ethnic disparities persist.

In the last 30 years, 11 of the 16 KIDS COUNT index measures of child well-being have improved nationwide. Nebraska has seen improvements in only half of those 16 measures.

“Nebraska’s children are one quarter of our population, but 100 percent of our future,” said Aubrey Mancuso, executive director of Voices for Children. “It is imperative that we use the data, knowledge and evidence we have to create sound policies that will help each of our children reach their fullest potential.”

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* shows how crucial accurate data is to sound policymaking. The 2010 census missed 2.2 million kids, and the upcoming count may miss even more if young children are not a priority. It is estimated that every Nebraskan not counted in the census results in a loss of nearly \$21,000 in federal funding. The stakes are high: 55 major federal programs, including Head Start and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), allocate more than \$880 billion each year based on census data.

The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, published by the Annie E. 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. Nebraska ranks:

- 5th in economic well-being. Nebraska families have experienced significant progress in economic security, with a 22 percent decrease in children living in poverty and a 17 percent decrease in children with parents lacking full-time employment since 2010.
- 8th in education. With 89 percent of high school students graduating on time, graduation rates continue to be a bright spot for Nebraska’s educational outcomes.
- 22nd in the family and community domain. Teen birth rates are at an all-time low nationwide, a trend also experienced in Nebraska, which saw a 42 percent decrease from 2010.

- 19th in health. Improvements in the percent of children without health insurance have stalled since 2014, and Nebraska now ranks in the bottom half of states for child coverage. More investments in state programs are needed to reach the 26,000 children statewide who remain uninsured.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation points to areas of tremendous improvement in children’s lives — including access to health care, decreased rates of teen childbearing and increased rates of high school graduation — and draws a direct line to policies that support this success. As the child population is expands, there are steps that policymakers should take to help all children thrive. The Annie E. Casey Foundation calls on elected officials and representatives to:

- *Expand the programs that make and keep kids healthy.* For the sake of all children and their families, access to expanded Medicaid must be implemented quickly and without complexity to the consumer.
- *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 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. Our policy priorities are guided by research, data, and proven best practices that improve child well-being. We pay close attention to the impact of race, socioeconomic status, and geography, and seek to remove barriers to opportunity within these areas.

#### **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).