



Children's Advocacy

A L L I A N C E

an independent voice
for Nevada's children

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

Across Nearly Three Decades, Nevada's Child Population Increases by 117 Percent, but Nevada Remains Poorly Ranked for Kids' Well-Being

The 30th *KIDS COUNT*[®] *Data Book* provides the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being across the United States

Las Vegas, Nevada — Nevada is now home to over 680,000 children, over 300,000 more children since 1990. However, Nevada continues to be ranked near the bottom — at 47th — among states for overall child well-being, according to the 30th edition of the *KIDS COUNT*[®] *Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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*, which was published in 1990. Nevertheless, more than 13 million U.S. children live in poverty and serious racial and ethnic disparities persist.

This year's *Data Book* presents current data and multiyear trends, which — whenever possible — compare data from 2010 with those from 2017, the most recent year available for most indicators. Nevada has improved marginally in some areas, but remains poorly ranked in the areas of economic well-being, education, family and community, and health.

"Many states that have continually been near the bottom of the Foundation's annual *KIDS COUNT* index rankings for how children are faring are the same ones that have seen tremendous growth in their child population," says Lisa Hamilton, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* shows how essential accurate data is to sound policymaking. In Nevada, an estimated 68,000 children are at risk of being missed in the 2020 census. The 2010 census missed 2.2 million such kids, and the upcoming count may miss even more if young children are not a priority. 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. Nevada receives more than \$1 billion (\$1,126,302,808) in federal funding for

these programs, which include Medicaid, SNAP and Head Start, based on a 2015 fiscal year report for the state.

The annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* from 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. Nevada ranks:

- 41st in economic well-being. Nevada families have experienced progress in economic security with a 14 percent decrease in the percentage of children living in poverty compared to 2010. Nevada has also seen a decrease in children living in households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, down 30 percent from 2010 to 2017.
- 47th in education. Nevada ranks 45th amongst states concerning children ages 3 and 4 not attending school with 63 percent of those children not attending; preschool attendance and early education continue to be rough spots in Nevada's education system. However, Nevada has improved in the percent of high school students graduating on time at 81 percent, a 19 percentage point increase since 2010.
- 42nd in the family and community domain. Teen birth rates are at an all-time low nationwide, and Nevada is seeing its lowest rate (22 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19) since 2010 when the rate was 39 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19. Nevada has also seen a slight decrease in children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma at 17 percent, down from 22 percent in 2010.
- 46th in health. Nevada has been making progress insuring its children in the state, but fell short in 2017 with regard to the percentage of children who still lack health insurance: 8 percent, an increase from 2016 (7 percent). More investments in state programs are needed to reach the 58,000 children statewide who remain uninsured.

"The *KIDS COUNT* data shows that while we are making progress, it is slow and we are leaving too many children behind. Our investments have not kept pace with our growth, resulting in stagnant rankings," said Denise Tanata, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Alliance. "It is time that we take a strong look at what our children need and identify the resources to make that happen. We have three decades of data showing that what we have done in the past isn't enough. We cannot afford to let down another generation of Nevadans."

The Casey Foundation points to areas of tremendous improvement in children's lives nationally — 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. Especially as the child population is expanding, there are steps that policymakers should take to help all children thrive. 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, states should expand access to Medicaid. Medicaid access was expanded in the Nevada in 2014, a big win for the state.

- *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, including 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. Additional information is available at 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.

About the Children's Advocacy Alliance

The Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA) is a community-based nonprofit organization that advocates for policy changes that benefit Nevada's children and families by researching and utilizing current data and promoting evidence-based policies to ensure that every child has a chance to thrive. CAA engages the community by bringing people together to address challenges and opportunities around children's issues to leverage collective strength toward improving the systems that support the well-being of Nevada's children. For more information, visit www.caanv.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.