



South Dakota KIDS COUNT
Beacom School of Business
University of South Dakota
414 E. Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069-2390



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

Contact: Carole Cochran | carole.cochran@usd.edu | 605-677-6432

South Dakota Adds More Than 15,000 Children Since 1990, Surge Calls for Improvements in Early Education

30th KIDS COUNT® Data Book provides the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States

VERMILLION, South Dakota — South Dakota is now home to 15,403 more children than in 1990, part of the rapid growth in the Midwest region. With this boom in the youth population, greater investments must be made to expand access to early childhood education.

The 2019 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* from the Annie E. Casey Foundation — 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.

South Dakota's overall ranking in this year's *Data Book* has improved from 29th in 2018 to 26th in 2019. The data show an improvement in the percentage of high school students not graduating on time, decreasing a total of 6 percent from 2010 to 2017, the most recent year of data available. However, education still has areas that need improvement. Recent data show almost two-thirds of South Dakota children did not attend preschool, ranking the state 45th in the nation.

“It is easier to invest in our state’s children earlier rather than later,” said Carole Cochran, Program Director of South Dakota KIDS COUNT. “Early childhood education helps prepare kids with the knowledge and skills necessary to grow into contributing members of South Dakota. With the state becoming more diverse, it is important that all children have access to early childhood education in order to eliminate any disparities that exist.”

The *Data Book* 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. South Dakota ranks:

- Ninth in economic well-being. Child poverty rates have fallen slightly in recent years, but almost one in five (17 percent) South Dakota children lived in poverty in 2017.
- 31st in education. Sixty-four percent of children in South Dakota cannot read proficiently by fourth grade, a slight decrease since 2009, and 62 percent of kids in South Dakota are not proficient in math by eighth grade, an increase since 2009.

- 24th in the family and community domain. South Dakota saw a 7 percent increase between 2010-2017, with 31 percent of children living in single-parent households (62,000) in 2017.
- 45th in health. Child death rates have increased slightly since 2010. In 2017, South Dakota ranked 49th with a rate of 41 deaths per 100,000 children ages one to 19.

“America’s children are one-quarter of our population and 100 percent of our future,” said Casey Foundation president and CEO Lisa Hamilton. “All of the 74 million kids in our increasingly diverse country have unlimited potential, and we have the data, knowledge and evidence to create the policies that will help them realize it. It’s incumbent on us to do just that.”

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 do the following:

- *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.
- *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 five 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 South Dakota KIDS COUNT

The South Dakota KIDS COUNT Project provides a broad picture of how the South Dakota children are doing and provides parents, policymakers, advocates and others interested in the well-being of children with information they need to make informed decisions about policies and programs for children and families.

About the Beacom School of Business

USD’s Beacom School of Business was established in 1927 and has been accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) since 1949. The leading business school in the region, Beacom’s programs are consistently ranked among the top business schools in the nation by Princeton Review, U.S. News & World Report and others for its high-quality learning experience, student success, affordability and high-caliber of faculty and

students. Whether a student chooses face-to-face or online courses, Beacom's programs emphasize real-world experience through professional organizations, quality internships and capstone projects.

About the University of South Dakota

Founded in 1862 and the first university in the Dakotas, the University of South Dakota is the only public liberal arts university in the state, with 205 undergraduate and 73 graduate programs in the College of Arts & Sciences, School of Education, School of Law, Sanford School of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, Beacom School of Business and College of Fine Arts. With an enrollment of nearly 10,000 students and more than 400 faculty, USD has a 17:1 student/faculty ratio, and it ranks among the best in academics and affordability. USD's 17 athletic programs compete at the NCAA Division I level.

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.

###