



**UNDER EMBARGO until Tuesday, September 25 at 12:01 a.m. ET**

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## **Florida Missing Opportunities to Give Young Adult Parents and Their Kids a Boost**

*New Casey Foundation report illuminates needs and barriers facing Florida's young parents and their children*

**TAMPA, Fla.** — With limited access to opportunities to advance their education and find family-sustaining jobs, Florida's 148,000 young adult parents face hurdles to support their children and fulfill their own potential, according to *Opening Doors for Young Parents*, the latest KIDS COUNT® policy report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT grantee in Florida, Florida KIDS COUNT, joined the call for action so these young parents can contribute to the state's communities and economy.

The fifty-state report reveals that, at 9 percent, Florida is below the national average (10 percent) of youth ages 18 to 24 who are also young parents. The report highlights the following statewide trends and areas of concern:

- 183,000 children in Florida have young parents ages 18 to 24.
- 78 percent of children of young parents in Florida live in low-income families, one of the highest percentages in the country.
- Only 16 percent of young parents ages 18 to 24 have completed an associate degree or higher.
- 64 percent of Florida's young parents are people of color, facing challenges exacerbated by discrimination and systemic inequities, with their children standing to suffer the most.

"While we see Florida's numbers improving, we are also very aware that young parents often find themselves in more difficult positions to provide their children with the supports needed to successfully grow physically, socially and emotionally," said Florida KIDS COUNT Director Dr. Norin Dollard. "Home visitation programs and quality early childhood education programs provide supports to children that enable their parents to pursue employment and educational opportunities and better provide for their families. Ensuring that all parents have access to resources creates better futures for themselves and their children and expanding the investment in these types of programs improves the lifelong outcomes for children, and increases the skills of parents who are better

prepared for success in the workforce, have fewer contacts with the justice system and lower rates of child abuse and neglect.”

The report spotlights a national population of more than 6 million, including 2.9 million young adult parents, ages 18 to 24, and 3.4 million children nationwide living with young parents. *Opening Doors for Young Parents* illuminates the most common obstacles young adult parents face, including incomplete education, lack of family-sustaining employment opportunities, lack of access to quality child care, inadequate and unstable housing and financial insecurity.

These barriers threaten not only these young adults, but also their young children, setting off a chain of diminished opportunities for two of our nation’s future generations. But the report includes recommendations for addressing the obstacles that young parents face, most of which can be driven by policy solutions at the state level.

The Casey Foundation stresses the importance of a two-generation approach to equip young parents for success. “If we don’t support young people when they become parents, we are cheating two generations out of having a positive future,” warned Casey Foundation President and CEO Patrick McCarthy. “We can help young adult parents develop the skills they need to raise their children, contribute to their communities, and drive our national economy forward.”

Florida KIDS COUNT further stresses the importance of helping the state’s young parents access educational and employment opportunities. In an increasingly competitive workforce landscape, education can make a significant difference in earning power for families. However, as the data demonstrate, young adult parents here in Florida, like young parents nationwide, do not have the post-secondary education or specialized skills to obtain family-sustaining jobs.

### **Release Information**

*Opening Doors for Young Parents* will be available September 25 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at <https://www.aecf.org/opening-doors-for-young-parents>. Reporters may request an embargoed copy beginning September 18.

### **About Florida KIDS COUNT**

Florida KIDS COUNT is part of a nationwide KIDS COUNT Network, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Florida KIDS COUNT is in the Department of Child & Family Studies at the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences, University of South Florida. The objective of Florida KIDS COUNT is to inform Floridians and their policy makers about the quality of life for Florida's children, and to build leadership and accountability for action on behalf of our children. Using selected key well-being indicators and general demographic profiles, Florida KIDS COUNT provides a consistent and reliable source of information that is adaptable to a variety of uses such as policy analysis, grant and proposal writing, needs assessments and public education.

**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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