



Kentucky **youth** Advocates

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

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**New Report Focuses on Building Opportunities for Kentucky's Young Adult Parents
and Their Children to Thrive**

LOUISVILLE — There are 50,000 Kentucky young adult parents facing a unique set of challenges and opportunities to help their families thrive, according to the latest KIDS COUNT® policy report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Opening Doors for Young Parents*. With the right support, all parents — regardless of their age, income, or education — can create a stable environment for their children while also adding to a stronger Kentucky workforce.

"The report in many ways confirms our common-sense thinking that young parents are struggling and need pragmatic solutions to succeed in today's economy and provide healthy and hopeful homes for their children," said Dr. Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. "These young parents face unique challenges as they reach milestones of adulthood and parenthood all at once. In fact, parent and child are undergoing the first and second most important periods of human development together. For the state, that means there are unique opportunities to strengthen families by helping the young parents learn during this period of growth while also figuring out how to be effective teachers for their children."

The fifty-state report reveals that, at 13 percent, Kentucky is above the national average (10 percent) on young adults ages 18 to 24 who have minor children. The report and supplemental data highlight the following statewide trends:

- Kentucky has 57,000 children who are living with at least one parent aged 18 to 24.
- At 81 percent, Kentucky ranks second in the nation for the percentage of children of young parents living in low-income families (less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level).
- Nearly 40 percent of Kentucky's young parents are neither in school nor working.
- Among Kentucky's young parents, 77 percent have a high school degree or GED and 16 percent have less than a high school degree.

Kentucky's **independent** voice for Kids



The report illustrates that to succeed, young adult parents need what all young people need — access to education and job training, strong mentors, and skills to be ready for today’s workforce — and what all parents need — access to affordable, high-quality child care and parenting skills programs to create thriving, financially stable families. The combination of being a young adult and being a parent creates that unique opportunity to set families up for success.

“The myriad of challenges parents face requires a multifaceted approach. Family Scholar House recognizes the important consideration of financial security, education and employment, housing, child care, and parenting resources when wrapping services around the young parents and their children on our campuses. By helping these young adults picture a future for themselves, we can help them build a brighter future for their children,” said Cathe Dykstra, president and CEO of Family Scholar House.

To equip young adult parents and their children for success, Kentucky Youth Advocates offers the following recommendations:

- Strengthen access to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), because of the critical role high-quality, affordable child care plays in supporting young adult parents as they get established in the workforce.
- Involve more young parents in the HANDS program, which teaches critical parenting skills to new parents to create a healthier and more supportive home environment for their children.
- Incorporate mentoring that’s proven effective for young adults into workforce development programs to grow and strengthen Kentucky’s workforce while also putting young parents on a path to be able to provide for their children.

“Without access to educational and employment opportunities, safe and affordable child care, and parenting supports, young parents face barriers to supporting their children and contributing to a strong Kentucky workforce. Communities — and that means everyone from the faith communities and nonprofits, to business leaders and educators — can get creative in supporting these young families. And, our state leaders can back pragmatic ideas that work for families, like CCAP and HANDS. We can get double the impact when we support young parents and their children in these critical phases of growth,” said Dr. Brooks.

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 Kentucky Youth Advocates

Kentucky Youth Advocates believes all children deserve to be safe, healthy, and secure. As THE independent voice for Kentucky's children, we work to ensure policymakers create investments and policies that are good for children. Learn more at www.kyyouth.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. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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