



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

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

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

**PORTLAND, Ore.** — With limited access to opportunities to advance their education and find family-sustaining jobs, Oregon's 31,000 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 Oregon, Children First for Oregon, 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, Oregon is just 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:

- 33,000 children in Oregon have young parents ages 18 to 24.
- 72 percent of children of young parents in Oregon live in low-income families, which is above the national average.
- Only 10 percent of young parents ages 18 to 24 have completed an associate degree or higher.
- 40 percent of Oregon's young parents are people of color, facing challenges exacerbated by discrimination and systemic inequities, with their children standing to suffer the most.

"Young parents and their children are both in their own critical periods of development," said Tonia Hunt, the executive director of Children First for Oregon. "As these parents navigate the challenges of becoming adults as well as parents, we can't afford to deprive them of the support they need to give their children a strong start in life."

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."

Children First for Oregon 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 Oregon, 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 Children First for Oregon**

Children First for Oregon (CFFO) is a statewide, nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower communities to advocate for kids so all children in Oregon can thrive. Since 1991, CFFO has worked across the state to galvanize community support for children and inform decision-makers about the solutions kids need. CFFO convenes and engages communities through four program areas: legislative solutions, foster youth advocacy, child abuse prevention and research and data. Learn more at [www.cffo.org](http://www.cffo.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](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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