

CENTER *for* PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

UNDER EMBARGO until Monday, September 24 at 11:01 p.m. CT

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Texas Missing Opportunities to Give Young Adult Parents and Their Kids a Boost

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

AUSTIN, Texas —Texas has 358,000 young adult parents, and many of these young parents, ages 18 to 24, face hurdles to supporting their children and fulfilling their own potential due to limited opportunities to advance their education and find family-sustaining jobs, 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 Texas, Center for Public Policy Priorities, joined the call for action so these young parents can contribute to the state's communities and economy.

The fifty-state report reveals that 13 percent of Texas's youth ages 18 to 24 are also young parents, compared to a U.S. average of only 10 percent.

The report highlights the following statewide trends and areas of concern:

- 450,000 children in Texas have young parents ages 18 to 24.
- 65 percent of children of young parents in Texas live in low-income families.
- Only 11 percent of young parents ages 18 to 24 have completed an associate degree or higher.
- 77 percent of Texas's young parents are people of color, facing challenges exacerbated by discrimination and systemic inequities in employment, housing and education, with their children standing to suffer the most.

"This report shows that too many young families in Texas face barriers to financial security and educational opportunities," said Kristie Tingle, research analyst with the Center for Public Policy Priorities. "If Texas leaders made higher education more accessible and allowed local voters and elected officials to raise standards for working families in their communities, many barriers to self-sufficiency for young adult parents and their children could be removed."

Opening Doors for Young Parents illuminates the most common obstacles America's 2.9 million 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 the 3.4 million

young children nationwide who are living with young parents, setting off a chain of diminished opportunities for two of our nation's future generations.

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."

Center for Public Policy Priorities further stresses the importance of helping the state's young parents access educational and employment opportunities for all young parents struggling to make ends meet in Texas, no matter their race, ethnicity or zip code. 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 Texas, 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 the Center for Public Policy Priorities

At the Center for Public Policy Priorities, we believe in a Texas that offers everyone the chance to compete and succeed in life. We envision a Texas where everyone is healthy, well-educated and financially secure. We want the best Texas — a proud state that sets the bar nationally by expanding opportunity for all.

The Center for Public Policy Priorities is the Texas grantee for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's national KIDS COUNT Project. Visit CPPP.org/kidscount to view the Center's Texas-specific data reports. Our regular updates on county-level data are available on the KIDS COUNT Data Center website. CPPP is an independent public policy organization that uses data and analysis to advocate for solutions that enable Texans of all backgrounds to reach their full potential. We dare Texas to be the best state for hard-working people and their families.

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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