

2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book

The Casey Foundation released the *2017 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, a report on child well-being in America today.

Trends worth celebrating:

- A higher percentage of kids than ever before — 95% — have health care coverage.
- Fewer kids overall are living in poverty.
- More parents have jobs.
- More families can bear the cost of housing.

Despite these gains, more families — including 10 million children — are living in high-poverty neighborhoods. Another area of concern is education, where the percentage of students falling short of proficiency in math and reading continues to grow.

The report shows Texas children rankings in state-to-state comparisons by topic as described:

Overall Well Being – Texas ranks #41: National data masks a great deal of state and regional variations in child well-being. A child's chances of thriving depend not just on individual, familial and community characteristics, but also on the state in which she or he is born and raised. States vary considerably in their amount of wealth and other resources. State policy choices and investments also strongly influence children's chances for success.

Economic Well-Being – Texas ranks #32: To help children grow into successful, productive adults, their parents need well-paying jobs, affordable housing and the ability to invest in their children's future. When parents are unemployed or earn low wages, they are limited in the investments they can make in their children's development, which can undermine their children's prospects of success in school and later economic success as adults. The negative effects of poverty on children also increase the chances of poor outcomes for youth and young adults, such as teen pregnancy and failure to graduate from high school

Education – Texas ranks #30: The early years of a child's life lay the foundation for future success. Establishing the conditions that promote educational achievement for children is critical, beginning with quality pre-

natal care and continuing into the early elementary school years. With a strong and healthy beginning, children can more easily stay on track to remain in school and graduate, pursue postsecondary education and training and successfully transition to adulthood. Yet the United States continues to have significant gaps in educational achievement by race and income. Addressing the achievement gap will be key to ensuring our future workforce can compete on global scale.

Health – Texas ranks #39: Children's health is the foundation of their overall development, and ensuring that they are born healthy is the first step toward increasing the life chances of disadvantaged children. Poverty, poor nutrition, inadequate housing, lack of preventive health care, substance abuse, maternal depression and family violence put children's health at risk. Poor health in childhood affects other critical aspects of a child's life, such as school readiness and attendance, and can have lasting consequences on his or her future health and well-being.

Family & Community – #47: Children who live in nurturing families and are part of supportive Communities have better social-emotional and learning outcomes. Parents struggling with financial hardship have fewer resources to invest in children and are more prone to stress and depression, which can interfere with effective parenting. Where families live also matters. When communities have strong institutions and the resources to provide safety, good schools and quality support services families and children are more likely to thrive.

The KIDS COUNT Data Book may be downloaded at:

www.aecf.org/databook

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