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## **National *KIDS COUNT* Data Book on the status of American children released**

**25<sup>th</sup> edition of KIDS COUNT Data Book highlights national improvements in health, safety, education and decline in teen birth rate since 1990**

**Rhode Island continues to be ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in the nation for overall child well-being**

Providence, RI (July 22, 2014) – The 25<sup>th</sup> annual national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a state-by-state report on children’s well-being issued by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, finds that Rhode Island ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in the nation for overall child well-being (1<sup>st</sup> is the best and 50<sup>th</sup> is the worst). Rhode Island ranked last in New England, following Massachusetts (1), Vermont (2), New Hampshire (4), Connecticut (7) and Maine (14).

The *2014 KIDS COUNT Data Book* provides a comprehensive portrait of how children are faring in the U.S. as a whole and in each of the 50 states. State-by-state rankings and supplemental data will be available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center at 12:01 a.m. EDT, July 22, 2014, at [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org). Data Center users can create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and view real-time information on mobile devices.

According to the *2014 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, there were improvements nationwide in many indicators in the health, education and safety areas:

- More children have access to health insurance coverage than before the recession,
- Preschool attendance and high school graduation showed steady improvements, and
- Child and teen mortality and teen substance abuse rates have fallen.

Economic progress still lags across the country, even after the end of the recession. Since 1990, there has been an increase in the child poverty rate, as well as the percentage of children growing up in poor communities.

“On several fronts, we’ve seen the difference that smart policies, effective programs and high-quality practice can make in improving child well-being and long-term outcomes,” said Patrick McCarthy, the Foundation’s president and CEO. “We should all be encouraged by the improvements in many well-being indicators in the health, education, and safety areas,”

“But we must do much more,” McCarthy said. “We should strengthen our commitment and redouble our efforts until every child in America develops to full potential.”

### **Rhode Island’s national rankings for child wellbeing**

State rankings are based on an index of 16 indicators in four key areas. While Rhode Island ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in the nation for overall child well-being (the same ranking as 2013), rankings were also issued for the four key areas:

- *Health*: Rhode Island ranks 15<sup>th</sup> (a decrease from 5<sup>th</sup> in 2013, despite improvements in 3 out of 4 indicators)
- *Education*: Rhode Island ranks 25<sup>th</sup> (a decrease from 24<sup>th</sup> in 2013)
- *Economic Well-Being*: Rhode Island ranks 26<sup>th</sup> (an increase from 31<sup>st</sup> in 2013)
- *Family and Community*: Rhode Island ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> (the same from 2013)

### **Indicators of child well-being in Rhode Island**

There were several indicators on which Rhode Island improved.

#### ***Rhode Island has low rates of uninsured children (Health)***

- In Rhode Island in 2012, 5% of children did not have health insurance, compared to 6% without health insurance in 2008. Rhode Island is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> best in the nation for this indicator.

“The fact that more children have health insurance demonstrates Rhode Island’s commitment to children’s well-being,” stated Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “By covering our most vulnerable children and their families through Rite Care, Rhode Island has continued to make the health and well-being of our future generation a priority.”

#### ***Decrease in Children in Families without a High School Diploma (Family and Community)***

- In 2012, 13% of Rhode Island children lived in families where the household head lacks a diploma; a decrease from 16% in 2005. Despite this improvement, Rhode Island is ranked 29<sup>th</sup> in the nation for this indicator.

#### ***Improvements in Reading and Math Skills (Education)***

- The percentage of fourth graders in Rhode Island not proficient in reading decreased, from 70% in 2005 to 62% in 2013. Rhode Island is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> best in the nation for this indicator.
- The percentage of eighth graders not proficient in math decreased, from 76% in 2005 to 64% in 2013. Rhode Island is ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for this indicator.
- *Please note that these indicators are measured by the percentage of students not proficient in reading and math. A decrease in this percentage is an improvement; since this means that more students are proficient in reading and math.*

Despite gains in several health and education indicators, the percentage of Rhode Island children whose parents lack secure employment increased.

***Increase in Children Living in Families without Full-Time Parental Employment (Economic Well-Being)***

- In 2012, 33% of children in Rhode Island were living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment; an increase from 30% of children in 2008. Rhode Island is ranked 31<sup>st</sup> in the nation for this indicator.

“The fact that more Rhode Island children are living in families without a full-time employed parent shows that the negative economic impacts of the recession continue to be felt among Rhode Island families,” said Burke Bryant. “Rhode Island must work toward ensuring that parents have strong job skills for stable good-paying jobs, while at the same time increasing access to high-quality education for all children so they will have the education and skills to compete when they are adults.”

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*Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, education, safety, and development of Rhode Island’s children and youth. It is one of fifty state-level organizations that work in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to track the social condition of children at the state and local level across the country.*

*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.*



**ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

DOMAIN RANK

26

Children in poverty

2012

19%

42,000 CHILDREN

UNCHANGED

2005 19%

Children whose parents lack secure employment

2012

33%

72,000 CHILDREN

WORSENERD

2008 30%

Children living in households with a high housing cost burden

2012

40%

87,000 CHILDREN

IMPROVED

2005 42%

Teens not in school and not working

2012

6%

4,000 TEENS

IMPROVED

2008 7%

**EDUCATION**

DOMAIN RANK

25

Children not attending preschool

2010-12

53%

12,000 CHILDREN

IMPROVED

2005-07 58%

Fourth graders not proficient in reading

2013

62%

N.A.

IMPROVED

2005 70%

Eighth graders not proficient in math

2013

64%

N.A.

IMPROVED

2005 76%

High school students not graduating on time

2011/12

24%

N.A.

WORSENERD

2005/06 22%

N.A. NOT AVAILABLE

**HEALTH**

DOMAIN RANK

15

Low-birthweight babies

2012

8.0%

877 BABIES

WORSENERD

2005 7.8%

Children without health insurance

2012

5%

10,000 CHILDREN

IMPROVED

2008 6%

Child and teen deaths per 100,000

2010

17

43 DEATHS

IMPROVED

2005 25

Teens who abuse alcohol or drugs

2011-12

7%

5,000 TEENS

IMPROVED

2005-06 9%

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**

DOMAIN RANK

32

Children in single-parent families

2012

40%

83,000 CHILDREN

WORSENERD

2005 33%

Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma

2012

13%

29,000 CHILDREN

IMPROVED

2005 16%

Children living in high-poverty areas

2008-12

13%

29,000 CHILDREN

IMPROVED

2000 14%

Teen births per 1,000

2012

20

760 BIRTHS

IMPROVED

2005 31