



**UNDER EMBARGO Until June 14, 2023 at 12:01 a.m. ET**

Contact Katherine Linwood  
Communications Manager  
[kchu@rikidscount.org](mailto:kchu@rikidscount.org)  
401.351.9400, Ext. 22

## **Inaccessible and Unaffordable: Lack of Child Care, High Cost Hurt Families, Workers, Economy**

*50-State Data Show Every State Lacks Essential Child Care for Working Parents;  
Annie E. Casey Foundation Urges Investments so Children Can Thrive,  
Parents Can Work, Providers Can Receive Fair Pay*

**Providence, RI:** — Rhode Island ranks 20<sup>th</sup> overall in child well-being, according to the *2023 KIDS COUNT*® Data Book, a 50-state report of recent household data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how children and families are faring. However, our country's lack of affordable and accessible child care short-changes children and causes parents in Rhode Island to frequently miss work or even quit their jobs, while those who can find care are paying dearly for it. These child care challenges cost the American economy billions of dollars a year and stymie women professionally.

The Data Book reports that too many parents cannot secure child care that is compatible with work schedules and commutes. The Data Book reports that from 2020—21, more than one in ten (11%) of children under age 6 in Rhode Island lived in families in which someone quit, changed, or refused a job because of problems with child care. And women are five to eight times more likely than men to experience negative employment consequences related to caregiving.

Even if parents can find an opening at child care near their home, they often can't pay for it. In 2021 in Rhode Island, the average cost of center-based child care for a toddler was \$13,462, 12% of the median income of a married couple and 38% of a single mother's income in the state.

While the cost of care burdens families, child care educators are paid worse than 98% of professions. Median national pay for child care educators was \$28,520 per year or \$13.71 an hour in 2022, less than the wage for retail (\$14.26) and customer service (\$18.16) workers.

The failings of the child care market also affect the current and future health of the American economy, costing \$122 billion a year in lost earnings, productivity and tax revenue, according to one study. All of these challenges put parents under tremendous stress to meet the dual responsibilities of providing for their families and ensuring their children are safe and nurtured.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and The Right from the Start Campaign (<http://www.RightfromtheStartRI.org>) are focused on advancing critical policies to help families with babies and young children.

"Families need access to affordable, high-quality child care so parents can work and children can grow, learn, and thrive," said Paige Clausius-Parks, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Executive Director. "Child care is essential to Rhode Island families and our economy. Nine out of 10 families in Rhode Island cannot afford child care. In state fiscal year 2024, the state will invest new resources that begin to address the staffing crisis in child care. With only half the number of families receiving help as we were helped in 2003, family income eligibility limits the lowest in New England, and provider rates that do not cover the cost of quality care, we need to continue working to pass the *Rhode Island Child Care is Essential Act!*"

Each year, the *Data Book* presents national and state data from 16 indicators in four domains — economic well-being, education, health, and family and community factors — and ranks the states according to how children are faring overall. Rhode Island ranks:

- Economic well-being: 24<sup>th</sup>
- Education: 33<sup>rd</sup>
- Health: 8<sup>th</sup>
- Family and community: 27<sup>th</sup>

“A good child care system is essential for kids to thrive and our economy to prosper. But our current approach fails kids, parents, and child care workers by every measure,” said Lisa Hamilton, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “Without safe child care they can afford and get to, working parents face impossible choices, affecting not only their families, but their employers as well.”

Transitioning from a faltering child care system to creating a flourishing one will take new thinking and investing at the local, state, and national levels. An executive order issued by President Biden in April is aimed at expanding access, lowering costs, and raising wages. It could prove to be a helpful framework, but more is needed:

- Federal, state, and local governments should invest more in child care. State and local governments should maximize remaining pandemic recovery act dollars to fund needed child care services and capacity. Congress should reauthorize and strengthen the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, and increase funding for public pre-kindergarten and Head Start.
- Public and private leaders should work together to improve the infrastructure for home-based child care, beginning by lowering the barriers to entry for potential providers by increasing access to start-up and expansion capital.
- To help young parents, Congress should expand the federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program, which serves student parents.

###

#### **RELEASE INFORMATION**

The 2023 *KIDS COUNT*® *Data Book* will be available at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://www.aecf.org/databook). Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the *Data Book* can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at [datacenter.aecf.org](http://datacenter.aecf.org).

#### **About Rhode Island KIDS COUNT**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education, and development of Rhode Island children with a core focus on equity. Please visit [rikidscount.org](http://rikidscount.org).

#### **ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation’s young people 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.