Nevada KIDS COUNT Newsletter

WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

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AECF Nevada Improves in 11 of the 16 Indicators of Child Well-Being: Still Ranks 47th in Overall Child Well-Being According to the *2016 KIDS COUNT Data Book*

The Annie E. Casey Foundation released its annual *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*—its 27th edition—on June 21. The *Data Book* identifies national trends in child well-being over six years (roughly 2008-2014), comparing national and state level data related to 16 indicators of child well-being.

Although, nationally, many child well-being indicators improved since the Great Recession, the U.S. child poverty rate increased from 18 percent in 2008 to 22 percent in 2014. The rate has proven to be somewhat intractable, as the 2014 rate—the latest data available—remained unchanged from the prior year.

Despite the challenging economic climate, the *Data Book* finds youth are healthier and more likely to graduate high school on time than teens of six years ago. Generation Z teenagers—the group that follows the Millennials—saw improvements in teen birth rates, the percentage of teens abusing drugs and alcohol and the percentage of high school students not graduating on time.

"This generation of teenagers and young adults are coming of age in the wake of the worst economic climate in nearly 80 years, and yet they are achieving key milestones that are critical for future success," said Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of the Casey Foundation. "With more young people making smarter decisions, we must fulfill our part of the bargain, by providing them with the educational and economic opportunity that youth deserve. We urge candidates in state and national campaigns to describe in depth their proposals to help these determined young people realize their full potential."

State Rankings for the *2016 Data Book*
Nevada ranks 47th among the states in overall child well-being, the same position as last year. Of the four domains that comprise overall child well-being, each including four indicators, Nevada ranks 40th in health; 40th in economic well-being; 44th in family and community; and 49th in education. Nevada's ranking improved over last year on all domains with the exception of family and community. Notable is Nevada's economic well-being domain ranking, which rose from 46th to 40th place since the *2015 Data Book*.

The three top-ranked states for overall child well-being are Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Iowa. Louisiana, New Mexico, and Mississippi are the three lowest-ranked states.

Nevada Trends

Nevada improved in 11 of the 16 indicators over the past few years. All of the education indicators improved, as did three health indicators, two family and community indicators and two economic well-being indicators. The indicators that worsened include the percentage of children who live in poverty, the percentage of children living in high-poverty areas, the percentage of children whose parents lack secure employment, the percentage of children in single-parent families and the percentage of low-birthweight babies.

Nevada's highest rankings in individual indicators are the percentage of teens abusing alcohol and drugs (5th) and the child and teen death rate (22nd). Nevada lowest rankings include the percentage of high school students not graduating on time (50th), percentage of children ages 3 and 4 not attending school (49th) and percentage of children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma (48th).

The following presents selected child well-being indicator trends for Nevada:

- In 2014, 22 percent of Nevada children under age 18 lived in poverty, increasing from 15 percent in 2008 (a 47 percent increase). Nevada ranks 29th among the states on this indicator. The poverty rate decreased by 1 percentage point from 2013 to 2014.
- In 2013-2014, 5 percent of Nevada children ages 12 to 17 abused alcohol or drugs during the past year, declining from 9 percent in 2007-2008 (a 44 percent decrease). Nevada ranks 5th on this indicator.
- In 2014, the teen birth rate was 29 live births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19, falling from 49 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19 in 2008 (a 41 percent decrease). Nevada ranks 38th on this indicator.
- In 2012-2014, 68 percent of Nevada children ages 3 to 4 did not attend school, decreasing from 70 percent in 2007-2009 (a 3 percent decrease). Nevada ranks 49th on this indicator.
- In 2012-2013, 33 percent of Nevada high school students did not graduate on time, decreasing from 44 percent in 2007-2008 (a 25 percent decrease). Nevada ranks 50th on this indicator.
- In 2014, 10 percent of Nevada children under age 18 were not covered by any health insurance, decreasing from 20 percent in 2008 (a 50 percent decrease). Nevada ranks 47th on this indicator.

The *Data Book* is available on the AECF website, www.aecf.org.

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas or the Nevada System of Higher Education.

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