

Some progress made in KIDS COUNT study

LOUISVILLE— Kentucky has made progress in half of 16 indicators of child well-being, according to the 2025 KIDS COUNT Data Book, a 50-state report of recent data developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation analyzing how kids are faring in post-pandemic America.

However, the data show Kentucky kids still fall behind in reading and math scores, are more likely to experience poverty than peers in other states, and more likely to experience early death.

State and community leaders must do more to ensure the best possible outcomes for every child, no matter where they grow up in the Commonwealth.

"Each year, this annual report card on kids gives policymakers, advocates, and communities the data they need to make policy and budget recommendations and set priorities," said Dr. Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates, Kentucky's member of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT network.

"The reality is, however, that we are at an inflection point in Frankfort. Kentucky's kids will remain at the bottom of the pack among peer states unless the General Assembly and Governor take definitive

action. For instance, there are a myriad of moves the Beshear Administration can make immediately and there are commonsense policies and budget priorities around which House and Senate leadership can act come the 2026 session to improve family economic stability, student achievement, and child health and safety across our Commonwealth. The haunting question is not, 'Can we improve our kids' well-being?' but rather, 'Will we?'"

The Data Book annually 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. Since 2019, Kentucky has made progress on eight child well-being indicators, regressed on six, and remained steady on two.

Here are a few data highlights on how Kentucky kids fare from the report:

While slightly improved since 2019, one in five children live in poverty — ranking the Commonwealth 44th among states.

Sixty-three percent of young children were not in school in 2019-2023, compared to 58% in 2014-2018, demonstrating a continued need for a robust early childhood education

infrastructure that prioritizes early learning and care for our youngest learners.

Over two-thirds of 4th graders scored below proficient in reading and over three in four 8th graders scored below proficient in math, which continues the trends highlighted in the 2024 Data Book looking at the unprecedented learning loss following the pandemic and the toll of chronic absenteeism on academic performance.

Just 3% of children were without health insurance in 2023, ranking Kentucky 3rd best among states, emphasizing the need to protect the gains made in child health coverage.

The child and teen (age 1-19) death rate climbed to 37 per 100,000 children in 2023 from 29 per 100,000 children in 2019, which is a 28% increase that is attributed in other reports to unsafe access to deadly means, such as firearms, illicit substances, or medications, as well as due to physical abuse or youth suicide.

The percentage of children in homes in which the household head lacks a high

school diploma continues to fall, 9% in 2023 compared to 11% in 2019.

The teen birth rate also continues to fall, currently at a rate of 21 per 1,000 females ages 15-19 in 2023 — yet this remains the Commonwealth's worst-ranked measure relative to other states at 46th in the nation.

In its 36th year of publication, the KIDS COUNT® Data Book provides reliable statewide numbers to help leaders see where progress is being made, where greater support is needed and which strategies are making a difference. Kentucky Youth Advocates encourages lawmakers as well as faith, school, and other community leaders to use this detailed information to make data-driven decisions that invest in young people and move the Commonwealth one step closer to being the best place in America to be a kid.

"We know what kids need to grow up healthy and connected so they can thrive as adults: stable homes, strong

SEE KIDS/PAGE A7

HAPPENINGS IN ANDERSON COUNTY

ANDERSON HISTORY MUSEUM HAS NEW HOURS

The Anderson County History Museum is located at 108 E. Woodford Street, in a former Carnegie Library built in 1908. It is filled with local artifacts that tell Anderson County's history.

It is now open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can also make an appointment to visit the museum on other days by calling Historical Society President George Geoghegan, or the Anderson Public Library.

The contact information is posted on the door at the museum. Admission is free.

KSP POST 12 TRAFFIC SAFETY CHECKPOINTS

FRANKFORT — The Kentucky State Police (KSP), Post 12 Frankfort, which provides coverage for Shelby, Spencer, Franklin, Anderson, Scott, Woodford, and

Fayette counties, will be conducting periodic traffic safety checkpoints at approved locations in accordance with Kentucky State Police Policy and Procedures Manual.

These checkpoints will be conducted in an effort to enforce the traffic laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Special attention will be paid to occupant protection (seatbelt adherence), sobriety, insurance, and registration violations.

BOYS' BASKETBALL CAMP THIS SUMMER

The Anderson County boys' basketball camp will be held on June 2-5.

The camp is open for boys who will be in K-9th grade this fall. Pre-register by May

SEE COUNTY/PAGE A8



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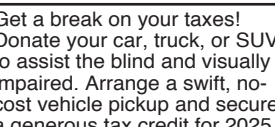
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