



Contact: Niccole Caan
Media Relations Manager
Indiana Youth Institute
800-343-7060, ext. 2737
ncaan@iyi.org

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Indiana's Children Are Healthier but Poverty Persists

INDIANAPOLIS – New data show Indiana children are growing up healthier but the state continues to struggle with high rates of child poverty.

Data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's [*KIDS COUNT Data Book*](#) for 2013 ranked Indiana 21st in child health, up 13 spots from last year. The new ranking is bolstered by a 20 percent decrease in the rate of child and teen deaths from 2005 to 2010 and a drop of four percent in the percentage of babies born at a low birthrate during the same time period. The rankings are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

“This is great news for Indiana’s children,” said Bill Stanczykiewicz, president and CEO of the Indiana Youth Institute. “Hopefully the Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT report helps to intensify state and local efforts to improve the lives of our children across all the indicators of child well-being.”

One indicator in which the state still lags is child poverty. Nearly one-fourth (23 percent) of Indiana’s children age 18 and under live in poverty. While that figure matches the national average, Indiana’s child poverty rate grew 35 percent from 2005 to 2011 compared to 21 percent for the national average. The Kids Count Data Book ranked the economic well-being of Hoosier children 26th, down two spots from the 2012 data book.

Indiana’s child poverty rate actually started growing before the Great Recession, Stanczykiewicz said, and the economic downturn exacerbated the problem.

“That initial uptick in child poverty and the recession are proving history to be accurate in that even as economies recover, poverty lags behind curve,” Stanczykiewicz said. “There is much we can do in our communities, congregations and youth organizations to encourage youth to prepare themselves academically for the current and future jobs in Indiana that pay high wages.”

Indiana’s overall rank for 2013 out of 50 states and Washington, D.C. improved to 30th from 31st in 2012. In addition to the health and economic well-being rankings, the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* ranks the state 34th in Education and 30th in Family and Community indicators.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's *KIDS COUNT Data Book* provides a detailed picture of how children across the nation are faring. It gives a comprehensive index to measure childhood well-being at the national and state level in four categories—Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, and Family and Community.

[The Indiana Youth Institute](#) (IYI) contributed data to the book for each of Indiana's 92 counties. Look here to see data from the [national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*](#). Find Indiana statewide data [here](#). Or see data for each of Indiana's 92 counties [here](#).

The Indiana Youth Institute promotes the healthy development of children and youth by serving the people, institutions and communities that impact their well-being.

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(Note to editors: IYI provides members of the media free data research and information on sources for stories on youth issues. To access this service or to arrange an interview with IYI President and CEO Bill Stanczykiewicz, please contact Niccole Caan, media relations manager, at 800-343-7060, 317-396-2737 or ncaan@iyi.org.)