



2014 KIDS COUNT Conference

Child Well-Being: A Call to Action



A Policy Agenda for a Better New Mexico 2014

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Executive Director
New Mexico Voices for Children
June 30, 2014

Presented By:



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Child Well-Being: A Call to Action

NM lowest in child well-being

By Susan Montoya Bryan
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE — It wasn't so long ago that David Hutchinson spent a month sleeping under a bridge while his wife and young daughter spent their nights at a domestic violence shelter.

But this wasn't a case of domestic violence. The couple simply had no choice. There were just no shelters in Phoenix for another month.

30 percent of state's kids living in poverty

The family is one of many in the U.S. that have been trying to raise children in the face of joblessness and homelessness. An annual survey released Monday by the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows the number of children living in poverty increased to 23 percent in 2011, after the recession.

The Southwest has been hit particularly hard. New Mexico, for the first time, has slipped to worst in the nation when

it comes to child well-being. More than 30 percent of children in the state were living in poverty in 2011 and nearly two-fifths had parents who lacked secure employment, according to this year's Kids Count survey.

Nevada is ranked No. 48, followed by Arizona. Mississippi, which has traditionally held last place, made slight improvements in early childhood education while reading

and math proficiency for some students increased, putting the state at No. 49.

Overall, the report shows there have been gains in education and health nationally, but since 2005, there have been serious setbacks when it comes to the economic well-being of children.

"There's little doubt things are getting worse," Kim Posich, executive director of the New Mexico Center

on Law and Poverty. "Aside from the fact the New Mexico economy has been so slow to turn around, the systems that generally serve people who are the working poor and suddenly lose their jobs or face greater hardship, all those systems have been hit hard."

Bottom of the ranks

NM last in nation for child well-being

Troubling statistics continue state trend

By Lindsey Anderson
LANDERSON@KUNM.COM

LAS CRUCES — No more "Thank God for Mississippi." New Mexico is dead last in the 2013 Kids Count report, taking the spot held by Mississippi since 1990.

Kids Count, released annually by the nonprofit Annie E. Casey Foundation, ranks the states on 16 indicators of child well-being, including economic well-being, education and health.

New Mexico's drop to 50th is largely due to improvements in Mississippi made in half of the indicators, especially the number of children attending preschool and children in families with the head of house lacks a high school diploma. Mississippi is now 49th.

New Mexico has never ranked above 40th since the

data was first compiled in 1990. Louisiana, Arizona and Texas were also in the bottom five, while New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Jersey were in the top five.

New Mexico saw significant increases of children in poverty, children whose parents lack secure employment and children living in households with a high housing cost burden — three of the four indicators of economic well-being — from the mid-2000s to 2011, according to the report.

"Child poverty is very bleak," said Shirley Jaquez, director of the Center for the Homeless of the University of New Mexico, which serves homeless and near-homeless children in the Mesquite Valley. "When you start out with child poverty already being very high, when a recession hits, there's no way to go but down."

"We see people lined up here at the soup kitchen, and the



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION ranks the 50 states using 16 specific indicators to determine a child's well-being, including economic security, education and health.

Kids Count is a "wake-up call" for legislators to improve the lives of New Mexico's children, she said.

Unstable employment forces families to choose between food, shelter and health care for their children, Jaquez said.

"For children what that means they're not going to get the health care they need when they need it," she said. "They're

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A GROUP OF CHILDREN smile in their classroom at Jardin de los Niños on Monday where they are cared for during the day. Children ranging from six weeks old to 10 years of age are cared for at the facility because they are either near homelessness or their families are homeless and they are at risk until they are in a stable environment for at least one year, according to Celia Valdez, child services coordinator with Jardin de los Niños. New Mexico ranks 50th in the U.S. for child well-being, according to the 2013 Kids Count report.

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New Mexico is Dead Last

In June 2013, New Mexico fell to **50th** in the nation for child well-being.

N.M. hits bottom in child well-being

■ State ranks 50th in 2013
National Kids Count survey

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By ELAINE TASSY
Journal Staff Writer

After circling the drain for more than two decades, New Mexico finally got

sucked in, coming in last in a national survey ranking childhood well-being.

The 2013 National Kids Count Data Book, State Trends in Child Well-Being, compiled by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, released today. It delves into four areas that affect kids long term: Economics, education, health, and family and community life.

New Mexico came in 50th overall for the first time since the survey began in 1980. Regularly ranking near last, it dropped from its previous 49th place in 2012, flipping positions with last year's loser, Mississippi.

New Mexico wasn't at the very bottom of the barrel in any of the four categories, but it was next to last in all of them. In the economic well-being, and family

and community categories, it was 49th to Nevada's 50th; in education, it was 49th to Montana's 50th.

Coming in last is a simple question of arithmetic and not a highly significant change, according to the report's main author.

More data

To get more detailed data, calculated by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's report, or to create your own raw and calculations, go to datacenter.kidscount.org

See N.M. on PAGE A5

The kids aren't alright

National numbers not much better

How are your children doing? Your grandchildren? According to statistics, if they are living in New Mexico, there's a good chance they're not doing too well.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation gleaned hundreds of government numbers to create the 2013 National Kids Count Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being. How did New Mexico rank?

A lot of people are up in arms about this. And it seems disproportionate to the number of people who were up in arms when we were No. 49 most of the last 23 years of the report on children: economic well-being, education, health, family and community. Within those categories, there are sub-categories, reviewed below. The cumulative numbers aggregate to put New Mexico at the bottom.

New Mexico need not take the brunt of this information. We as a nation look pretty dismal as well based on these numbers.

There are plenty of people talking about our children, and touting efforts to address the problems, particularly those rooted in education. Among those are Gov. Susana Martinez, state Rep. Mary Helen Garcia, the Children's Reading Foundation of Doña Ana County and The Bridge of Southern New Mexico.

However, our rankings today are a result of decisions made – or not made – 25 years ago. Anything we do today will take years to have an impact on these problems. These are also problems that involve all of us. Addressing them requires a sincere, concerted effort by our society as a whole, not just governmental action.

By doing what, you ask? That will take people with far more brains and vision than I. Regardless, we have to act now.

“We as a nation look pretty dismal as well based on these numbers.”

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Source: 2013 KIDS COUNT Data Book, Annie E Casey Foundation

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Child Well-Being: From Data to Action



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2013**

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KIDS COUNT ranking is based on 4 domains



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Each domain has 4 indicators

- Children in poverty (31%)
- Children whose parents lack secure employment (37%)
- Children in households with a high housing cost burden (36%)
- Teens not in school and not working (11%)

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Each domain has 4 indicators

- Children not attending preschool (62%)
- Fourth graders not proficient in reading (79%)
- Eighth graders not proficient in math (76%)
- High school students not graduating on time (33%)

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Each domain has 4 indicators

- Low birth-weight babies (8.7%)
- Children without health insurance (9%)
- Child and teen death rate (36 per 100,000)
- Teens who abuse alcohol or drugs (9%)

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Each domain has 4 indicators

- Children in single-parent families (43%)
- Children in families where household head lacks diploma (22%)
- Children living in high-poverty areas (21%)
- Teen birth rate (53 per 1,000)

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2014 update includes:

- Overarching policies that address more than one domain/indicator.
- Legislative action (or inaction) on recommendations.
- New policy recommendations.



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Overarching Policy Solutions: All Domains

- Ensure that enough tax revenue is collected that the state budget can fund programs that improve and support the well-being of New Mexico's children, families, and communities.
- Enact economic development initiatives that create high-wage jobs, increase revenue, and invest in our workforce.

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Overarching Policy Solutions: All Domains

- Take a two-generational approach to improving family economic security.
- Mandate a tax expenditure budget (TEB) and require accountability measures for tax breaks
- Enact economic development initiatives that create high-way jobs, increase revenue, and invest in our work force.

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Legislative Action 2014: Economic Well-Being

- Raise statewide minimum wage, index to inflation, raise tipped wage.

Policy Progress

No change



- Increase the Working Families Tax Credit.

Policy Progress

No change



- Expand access to high school equivalency programs and ABE.

Policy Progress

Improved



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EDUCATION

Legislative Action 2014: Education

- Restore K-12 funding to pre-recession, per-student, inflation-adjusted levels.

Policy Progress

Slight improvement



- Increase spending on NM Pre-K.

Policy Progress

Slight improvement



- Support early care and learning from land grant permanent fund.

Policy Progress

No change



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Legislative Action 2014: Health

- Expand and adequately fund school-based health centers.

Policy Progress

Very slight improvement



- Restore outreach and enrollment programs for Medicaid for kids.

Policy Progress

No change



- Expand outreach to pregnant women to enroll them in Medicaid.

Policy Progress

No change



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Legislative Action 2014: Family and Community

- Expand evidence-based and age-appropriate sex education and programs; defund abstinence-only programs.

Policy Progress

No change



- Restore eligibility for child care assistance to twice the poverty level.

Policy Progress

No change



- Expand funding for mentorship programs.

Policy Progress

Slight improvement



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New Policy Solutions 2015: Overarching

- Ensure that enough tax revenue is collected that the state budget can fund programs that improve and support the well-being of New Mexico's children, families, and communities.
- Mandate a tax expenditure budget.

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New Policy Solutions 2015: Economic Well-Being

- Take a two-generational approach to improving family economic security.
- Enact a rate cap of 36% ARP (including fees) on all predatory lending products.
- Ensure access to benefits for grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship caregivers.

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New Policy Solutions 2015: Education

- Increase funding for early childhood care and learning to incentive and adequately compensate for quality.
- Revisit zero-tolerance policies in order to keep more students in school.
- Expand programs that increase school attendance.

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New Policy Solutions 2015: Health

- Require and fund screening for adverse childhood experiences.
- Adequately fund evidence-based child abuse prevention programs and strengthen CYFD's role in child abuse prevention.
- Create a citizen oversight or review board for all CYFD child abuse cases that result in death.

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New Policy Solutions 2015: Family and Community

- Maintain current Medicaid eligibility for family planning services.
- Increase funding for evidence-based programs that prevent or delay second births by teen mothers.
- Reduce class sizes for children living in high-poverty areas.

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4 domains

16 indicators

70+ policy recommendations

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So what's next?

July 22, 2014

New national KIDS COUNT Data Book is released

- New Mexico's ranking can't get worse
- Could get better
- Could stay the same

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Regardless, we must keep our expectations high.

Our children deserve the opportunity to be
successful.

This is our ***call to action!***

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Thank you!

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