




**A
Campaign
for a Better
New Mexico**





































**Executive Summary
2016**



New Mexico KIDS COUNT Profile

This campaign is based on the 4 domains and 16 indicators in the national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*

National Rank (2016): 49th  Unchanged since 2015 (49th)

Domains	Indicators of child well-being			
 <p>Economic Well-Being National Rank: 48th</p>	<p>Children at or below the poverty level</p> <p>30% 146,000 children (2014)</p> <p> Improved since 2013 (31%)  Worse than US average (22%)</p>	<p>Children whose parents lack secure employment</p> <p>36% 182,000 children (2014)</p> <p> Worsened since 2013 (35%)  Worse than US average (30%)</p>	<p>Children living in households with a high housing cost burden</p> <p>31% 156,000 children (2014)</p> <p> Improved since 2013 (33%)  Better than US average (35%)</p>	<p>Teens (16-19) not in school and not working</p> <p>9% 10,000 teens (2014)</p> <p> Improved since 2013 (10%)  Worse than US average (7%)</p>
 <p>Education National Rank: 50th</p>	<p>Young children not in school</p> <p>59% 34,000 children (2012-14)</p> <p> Improved since 11-13 (60%)  Worse than US average (53%)</p>	<p>Fourth graders not proficient in reading</p> <p>77% (2015)</p> <p> Improved since 2013 (79%)  Worse than US average (65%)</p>	<p>Eighth graders not proficient in math</p> <p>79% (2015)</p> <p> Worsened since 2013 (77%)  Worse than US average (68%)</p>	<p>High school students not graduating on time</p> <p>28% (2012-13)</p> <p> Worsened since 11-12 (26%)  Worse than US average (18%)</p>
 <p>Health National Rank: 44th</p>	<p>Low birth-weight babies</p> <p>8.8% 2,282 babies (2014)</p> <p> Improved since 2013 (8.9%)  Worse than US average (8%)</p>	<p>Children without health insurance</p> <p>7% 36,000 children (2014)</p> <p> Improved since 2013 (9%)  Worse than US average (6%)</p>	<p>Child (1-14) and teen (15-19) death rates (per 100,000)</p> <p>31 165 deaths (2014)</p> <p> Worsened since 2013 (28%)  Worse than US average (24%)</p>	<p>Teens who abuse alcohol or drugs</p> <p>5% 9,000 teens (2013-14)</p> <p> Improved since 12-13 (7%)  Same as US average (5%)</p>
 <p>Family and Community National Rank: 48th</p>	<p>Children in single-parent families</p> <p>41% 193,000 children (2014)</p> <p> Improved since 2013 (43%)  Worse than US average (35%)</p>	<p>Children in families where household head lacks high school diploma</p> <p>18% 89,000 children (2014)</p> <p> Unchanged since 2013 (18%)  Worse than US average (14%)</p>	<p>Children living in high-poverty areas</p> <p>26% 135,000 children (2010-14)</p> <p> Worsened since 09-13 (24%)  Worse than US average (14%)</p>	<p>Teen (15-19) birth rate (per 1,000)</p> <p>38 2,543 births (2014)</p> <p> Improved since 2013 (43%)  Worse than US average (24%)</p>

Source: *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015 and 2016
NEW MEXICO VOICES FOR CHILDREN

A Campaign for a Better New Mexico

Executive Summary

2016

See www.nmvoices.org for the full campaign, which includes more information about how the indicators impact New Mexico, how the policy solutions would help New Mexico, and information on legislative and executive action on these recommendations.

This campaign is based on the 16 indicators of child well-being, organized under four domains, that are used by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in their KIDS COUNT program (see chart at right). The domains are:



All Domains



Domain: Economic Well-Being

Because the 16 indicators of child well-being are inter-related—as are the policies that would improve them—many of the recommendations address multiple indicators. We have placed these overarching policies separate from the policies that address the indicators more specifically.

Overarching Policy Solutions

- Ensure that enough tax revenue is collected so that the state budget can fund programs that improve and support the well-being of New Mexico’s children, families, and communities.
- Enact a more progressive income tax so those with the highest incomes pay their fair share.
- Mandate a tax expenditure budget (TEB) and require accountability measures for tax breaks that are intended to create jobs.
- Enact economic development initiatives that create high-wage jobs, increase revenue, and invest in our workforce.
- Ensure that children receive the financial and emotional supports they need during and after a parent’s incarceration.

Overarching Policy Solutions

- Support programs that take a two-generation approach to improving family economic security.
- Prioritize a two-generation approach within the TANF program so the primary focus is to provide opportunities to strengthen families through high-leverage education/ job training, parenting supports, and early childhood care and education services.
- Enact a rate cap of 36% APR (including fees) on all predatory lending products.
- Ensure that all workers can earn at least one week of paid sick leave.
- Enact policies to end wage theft.
- Enact policies to end food insecurity.



Domain: Economic Well-Being

Indicator: Children in Poverty

Extent of the Problem

- **30%** of New Mexico children live at or below the poverty level. Native American and Hispanic children, however, suffer from disproportionately high poverty rates of 44% and 34%, respectively. The poverty level is an annual income of less than \$25,000 for a family of four.

Policy Solutions: Children in Poverty

- Raise the statewide minimum wage, index it to rise with inflation, and raise the tipped wage to 60% of the minimum wage.
- Increase the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC), Low Income Comprehensive Tax Rebate (LICTR), and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).
- Support and promote the availability of resources and assistance for grandparents helping to raise their grandchildren, including access to financial resources, legal services, food and housing assistance, medical care, and transportation.
- Fund navigators to ensure that kinship foster care families have access to public benefits for which they are eligible.

Indicator: Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment

Extent of the Problem

- **36%** of New Mexico children have parents who lack full-time, year-round employment. The rate is 55% for Native American children.

Policy Solutions: Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment

- Expand access to high school equivalency, ABE, job training, and career pathways programs.
- Protect the unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund and reinstate benefits for child dependents.

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

Indicator: Children Living in Households with a High Housing Cost Burden

Extent of the Problem

- **31%** of New Mexico children live in households that spend 30% or more of their income on housing. The rate is 38% for Hispanic children.

Policy Solutions: Children Living in Households with a High Housing Cost Burden

- Increase funding for the state's Housing Trust Fund and increase federal HUD funding.
- Safeguard the Home Loan Protection Act from repeal or weakening.
- Increase funding for individual development accounts (IDAs) for parents and children.

Indicator: Teens Not in School and Not Working

Extent of the Problem

- **9%** of New Mexico teens ages 16 to 19 are neither enrolled in school nor working.

Policy Solutions: Teens Not in School and Not Working

- Enact initiatives to lower the cost of college such as: making lottery scholarships need-based; restoring the College Affordability Fund; lowering interest rates for student loans; and ending the predatory practices of private, for-profit colleges.



Domain: Education

Overarching Policy Solutions

- Increase spending on high-quality home visiting/parent coaching.
- Increase funding for the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program.
- Increase funding for child care to incentivize and adequately compensate for quality.
- Ensure support for community schools that offer school-based health care, after-school and mentor services, English as a second language classes, etc.
- Pass a constitutional amendment to support early care and education with a small percentage of the Land Grant Permanent Fund
- Increase training, technical assistance, compensation, and retention incentives for pre-K and other early learning providers.
- Sufficiently fund K-12 education, starting with restoring per-pupil, inflation-adjusted funding to pre-recession levels.
- Expand programs that increase school attendance.
- Reduce class sizes for children in high-poverty areas.
- Raise compensation for teachers, principals, and other student support staff.
- Revisit zero-tolerance policies and penalties in order to keep more students in school.

Indicator: Children Not Attending Preschool

Extent of the Problem

- 59% of New Mexico children ages 3 and 4 are not attending a preschool program such as pre-kindergarten or Head Start. Rates are actually best for Native American kids, at 53%. The rate for non-Hispanic white kids is 59% and 64% for Hispanic kids.

Policy Solutions: Children Not Attending Preschool

- Increase spending on high-quality pre-K so it is available to all 4-year-olds.
- Pass President Obama's Preschool for All proposal.

Indicator: 4th Graders Not Proficient in Reading

Extent of the Problem

- 77% of New Mexico 4th graders are not proficient in reading. The rates are a staggering 93% for Native American 4th graders and 83% for Hispanic 4th graders.

Policy Solutions: 4th Graders Not Proficient in Reading

- Increase learning opportunities by expanding the school day and year, and expand K-3 Plus to 8th grade for low-income students.
- Increase the availability of reading coaches and support evidence-based reading initiatives.

Indicator: 8th Graders Not Proficient in Math

Extent of the Problem

- 79% of New Mexico 8th graders are not proficient in math. The rates are 89% for Native American 8th graders, 88% for Blacks, and 83% for Hispanics.

Policy Solutions: 8th Graders Not Proficient in Math

- Expand after-school, mentorship, and tutoring programs.
- Provide math coaches and professional development for math teachers.

Indicator: High School Students Not Graduating on Time

Extent of the Problem

- **28%** of New Mexico high school students do not graduate on time. Rates are highest among Blacks (35%) and Native Americans (28%).

Policy Solutions: High School Students Not Graduating on Time

- Provide more school counselors.
- Identify students in 9th grade who require additional learning time and provide free summer school, after-

school, and online learning opportunities.

- Provide relevant learning opportunities through service learning and dual credit parity to better prepare students for career or college.
- Provide professional development for teachers on the use of technology.
- Increase funding for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs.
- Support dropout recovery programs.
- Provide support for vulnerable students (those experiencing homelessness, who are incarcerated, need special education, are English language learners, etc.) who are at risk for dropping out.



Domain: Health

Overarching Policy Solutions

- Require and fund child screening for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).
- Support early childhood services committees within county and tribal health councils in order to integrate health care with social, emotional/behavioral, and cognitive development for young children.
- Expand and adequately fund school-based health centers (SBHCs).
- Ensure that all workers can earn at least one week of paid sick leave.
- Pass and fund legislation to license dental therapists to provide limited dental care under the supervision of a dentist, especially in rural, tribal, and other under-served communities.

Indicator: Low Birth-Weight Babies

Extent of the Problem

- **8.8%** of New Mexico babies are born weighing less than 5.5 pounds. Rates are highest among Blacks (14%).

Policy Solutions: Low Birth-Weight Babies

- Expand outreach to pregnant women to enroll them in Medicaid early in their pregnancies.
- Expand and fully fund health and nutrition programs for pregnant teens.
- Fund home visiting under a Medicaid waiver to draw down federal funding.

Indicator: Children without Health Insurance

Extent of the Problem

- **7%** of New Mexico children lack health insurance. The rate of uninsurance for Native American children is 11%.

Policy Solutions: Children without Health Insurance

- Restore outreach and enrollment assistance for Medicaid for kids.
- Integrate the health insurance marketplace with Medicaid so that there is “no wrong door” for enrollment
- Simplify the enrollment and recertification process for Medicaid and enact express-lane enrollment.

Indicator: Child and Teen Death Rate

Extent of the Problem

- New Mexico's child and teen death rate is 31 deaths per 100,000 children aged 1 to 19. The rate is 38 per 100,000 Native American children and teens.

Policy Solutions: Child and Teen Death Rate

- Adequately fund evidence-based child abuse prevention programs and strengthen CYFD's role in child abuse prevention.
- Increase funding for child protective services to expand staff levels and reduce case loads.
- Create a citizen oversight or review board for all CYFD child abuse cases that result in death.

- Enact gun safety laws to limit unauthorized child access to guns.
- Increase funding for suicide prevention programs.

Indicator: Teens Who Abuse Alcohol or Drugs

Extent of the Problem

- 5% of New Mexico teens ages 12 to 17 had abused or were dependent on alcohol or drugs during the year prior to taking the survey.

Policy Solutions: Teens Who Abuse Alcohol or Drugs

- Expand mental health programs for children, youth and families.
- Allow treatment instead of incarceration for drug and alcohol offenses.



Domain: Family and Community

Indicator: Children in Single-Parent Families

Extent of the Problem

- 41% of New Mexico children live with an unmarried parent. Rates are highest among Native American children, 65% of whom live in single-parent families.

Policy Solutions: Children in Single-Parent Families

- Expand funding for mentorship services.
- Maintain current Medicaid eligibility for family planning services.
- Restore eligibility for child care assistance to twice the poverty level so single parents can work.

Indicator: Children in Families where Household Head Lacks a High School Diploma

Extent of the Problem

- 18% of NM children live in families where the head of household lacks a high school diploma. The rate is highest for Hispanic children at 24%.

Policy Solutions: Children in Families where Household Head Lacks a High School Diploma

- Provide additional need-based financial assistance for low-income and low-skilled adults seeking access to post-secondary education, job training, and career pathway programs.
- Expand access to high school equivalency, adult basic education (ABE), job training, and the career pathways pilot program I-BEST.

Indicator: Children Living in High-Poverty Areas

Extent of the Problem

- 26% of New Mexico children live in areas where the overall poverty rate is 30% or higher. Rates are more than double that for Native American children, 59% of whom live in high-poverty areas.

Policy Solutions: Children Living in High-Poverty Areas

- Create or expand incentives for developers to build mixed-income housing developments.
- Increase funding for individual development accounts (IDAs) for parents and children.
- Reduce class sizes for children in high-poverty areas.

Indicator: Teen Birth Rate

Extent of the Problem

- New Mexico's teen birth rate is 38 births per 1,000 female teens ages 15 to 19. Rates are 56 per 1,000 for both Hispanic and Native-American teens.

Policy Solutions: Teen Birth Rate

- Provide relevant learning opportunities through service learning.
- Increase funding for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs.
- Increase funding for evidence-based programs (such as home visiting) that prevent or delay second births by teen mothers.
- Expand school-based health centers (SBHCs).
- Expand evidence-based and age-appropriate sex education; defund abstinence-only programs.

Take Action!

How You Can Help Make This Campaign a Reality

If you want to help make New Mexico a better place for children and families, there are two simple but impactful things you can do:

1. Make a donation to NM Voices

Our supporters have helped us achieve many **policy wins**. In fact, one of our most powerful tools—working directly with legislators on specific policies—can **only** be paid for with donations from individuals like you.

Make a **donation** on our website (www.nmvoices.org).

2. Become a citizen co-sponsor of NM KIDS are COUNTing on Us

As a citizen co-sponsor you are pledging that:

- You believe New Mexico can—and should—do better by its children.
- You support the policies and principles laid out in this campaign as a framework for improving child outcomes.
- You will contact your state and national elected officials when key legislation is being considered that will impact child and family well-being. We'll make it easy for you with our email Action Alerts.

Sign up to be a **citizen co-sponsor** on our website (www.nmvoices.org).

Thank you for helping us make New Mexico's kids the state's top priority!

