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## **The Well-Being of Alabama's Children Shows Little Movement**

**MONTGOMERY** — The well-being of Alabama's children failed to keep pace with the rest of the country last year, causing the state's position relative to others to drop, according to a new report released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The *2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* uses 16 indicators from 2017 to rank each state across four domains: health, education, economic well-being and family and community. The report ranks Alabama 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation. New Hampshire and Massachusetts received this year's top rankings, while Louisiana and New Mexico are the lowest-ranked states.

Between 2016 and 2017, Alabama saw improvements in seven of the indicators tracked while nine indicators remained the same. However, disparities based on race and ethnicity continue to exist.

"The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* tells two different stories about how Alabama's children are faring," said Rhonda Mann, deputy director of VOICES for Alabama's Children, which is the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT grantee in Alabama. "When you look at the percentages of children measured in this year's report, the state stayed the same or showed improvement in all indicators, yet Alabama's rank dropped in almost half, including its overall ranking. What this demonstrates is that other states are improving the well-being of their children at a faster pace than Alabama."

Alabama showed the most progress in the education domain, making small improvements since last year's report in three of the four indicators the *Data Book* tracks: the percentage of fourth grade students who scored below proficient in reading (from 71 percent to 69 percent), the percentage of eighth grade students who scored below proficient in math (from 83 percent to 79 percent) and the percentage of high school students not graduating on time (from 13 percent to 11 percent).

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* is the 30th edition of an annual study based on publicly available data for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Alabama ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's inaugural report. This year's report uses figures from 2017, the most recent year data available in most cases.

“Alabama has long struggled to improve the well-being of its children relative to other states,” Mann said. “If we want to see more than just marginal improvements, we must do more than maintain the status quo. We must prioritize investments that strengthen the future of our children.”

### **Release Information**

The *2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book* will be available June 17 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at [aecf.org](http://aecf.org). Additional information is available at [aecf.org/databook](http://aecf.org/databook). Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs, and rankings in stories about the Data Book can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org).

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### **About VOICES for Alabama’s Children**

VOICES for Alabama’s Children is a statewide nonprofit that works to ensure the well-being of Alabama’s children through research, public awareness, and advocacy. For more information, visit [alavoices.org](http://alavoices.org).

### **About the Annie E. Casey Foundation**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation’s children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit [aecf.org](http://aecf.org). KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.