



EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE

Until 12:01 AM
July 25, 2012

CONTACT: Adam Hyla
Communications Director
206-324-0340 ext. 18
206-326-9964 cell
adam@childrensalliance.org

**2012 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK SHOWS WASHINGTON RANKS LOW
ON ECONOMIC SECURITY, HIGH ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

JULY 25, 2012 – New national rankings of child well-being show that Washington's kids have been hurt by hard times.

Washington ranks 18th out of all 50 states in the new *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a detailed look at 16 indicators of child well-being grouped into four domains: Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, and Family and Community.

The *Data Book* presents the most recent trends for kids in Washington and across the country, starting before the recession began and ending with the most recent year of available data. It shows that:

- Washington continues to be a leader in ensuring kids are healthy. The state ranked third overall for infant health and is making huge gains in the number of children with health coverage.
- Washington lags behind most other states when it comes to economic security for kids. The state is ranked near the bottom in terms of high housing costs that squeeze paychecks, and 65,000 more children have fallen into poverty since 2005.
- Washington's children of color are more likely to face a host of adverse childhood experiences, from poverty to lack of health coverage.

**CHART:
How Washington's
children rank
(page 3).**

"How our kids are doing is an indication of what the future holds," said Remy Trupin, executive director of the Washington State Budget & Policy Center. "The data show that kids in our state are faring worse, specifically in the areas of education and economic security."

"We know that children of color, in particular, are disproportionately likely to bear the brunt of hard times," said Paola Maranan, executive director of the Children's Alliance.

"These numbers are a wake-up call for all of us to invest in the solutions that build a great future for children across our state," she said.

Washington has slipped in the state-by-state rankings on 8 of the 16 indicators, and doing particularly poorly in the Economic Well-Being and Education domains. Among the changes:

- Since 2005, 65,000 more children are living in poverty and ranks 16th in the nation on this indicator.

- Forty-three percent of children are living in households with a high housing cost burden. The state ranks 40th in the nation for high housing costs.
- About one in four high school students will not graduate on time. The state ranks 36th.
- Sixty percent of 3- and 4-year-olds are not enrolled in preschool, which can prepare them for success in K-12.

However, the state is a national leader in ensuring that kids are healthy.

- The number of children who are going without health insurance has dropped 25 percent.
- We have seen substantial decreases in the abuse of alcohol and drugs by teens.

“The gains in children’s health insurance are no accident,” said Jon Gould, deputy director of the Children’s Alliance. “Apple Health for Kids, our state’s affordable, comprehensive health coverage plan for income-qualified children, has enrolled thousands of children whose families can’t gain access to employer-based coverage.”

Tacoma mother Sonia Woods enrolled her two children in Apple Health for Kids in 2010. Last year, after a period of time staying at home caring for her younger child, now 2, she re-entered the labor market.. Her new job has health insurance for her family, but she was relieved that Apple Health for Kids covered her children until her employer-based coverage kicked in.

“I don’t worry so much about health insurance for myself,” she said, “but my older child has allergies and needs to see the doctor frequently. Apple Health for Kids has been there for my kids even as my economic circumstances have changed.”

This past legislative session, legislators set aside \$1 million to enroll more eligible children in Apple Health for Kids. Unfortunately, one hundred thousand children still remain uninsured.

“Our state’s leaders know that all kids deserve the chance to grow up healthy,” said Gould. “Even in hard budget times, we are finding a way to prioritize kids’ health care in ways that’ll pay off for years to come.”

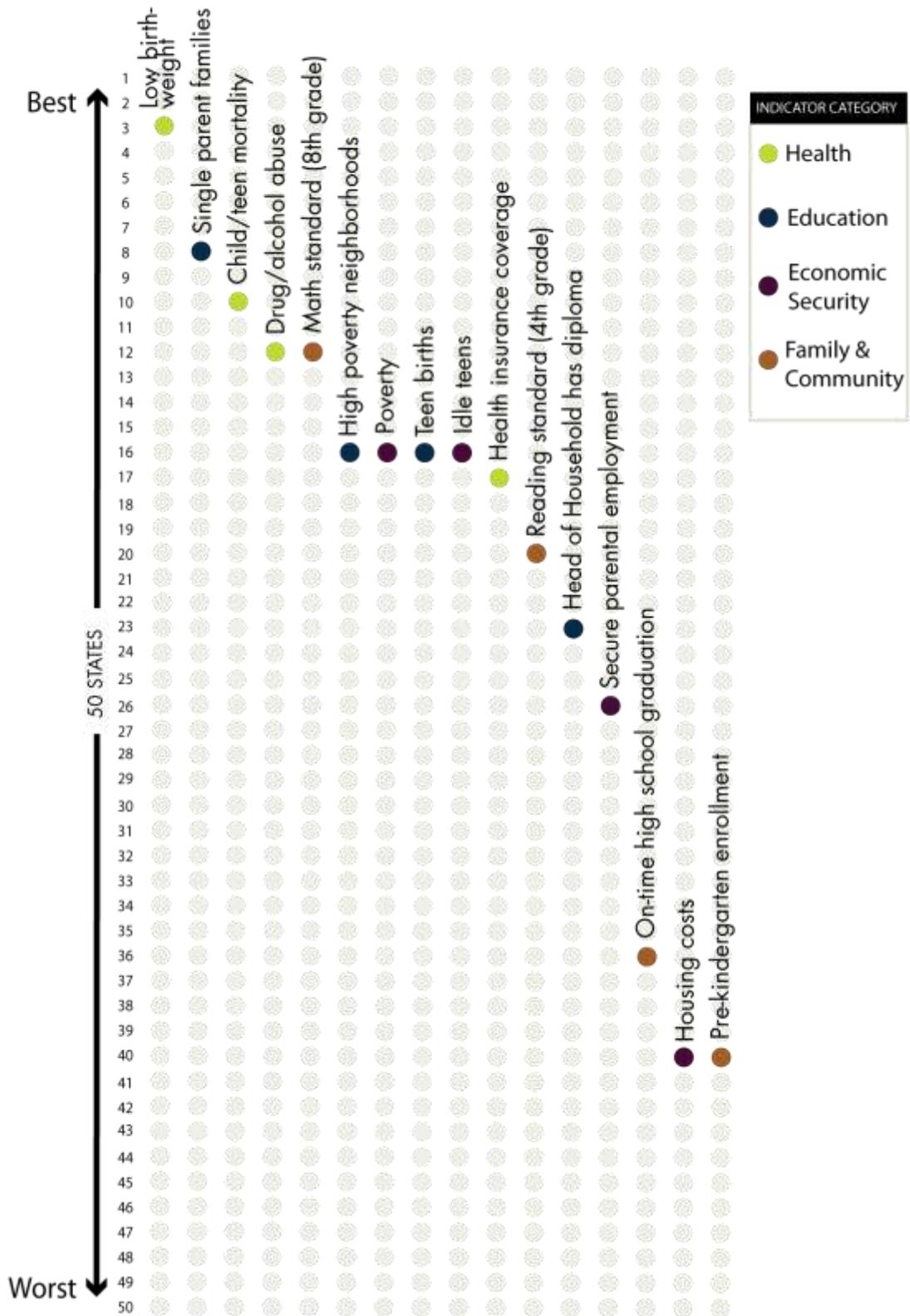
The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* with state-by-state rankings and supplemental data will be available at 12:01 a.m. EDT, July 25, 2012 at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.

Follow the Annie E. Casey Foundation on this issue on Twitter @aecfkidscount and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/KIDSCOUNT>.

#

KIDS COUNT in Washington (www.kidscountwa.org) is a joint effort of the Children's Alliance (www.childrensalliance.org) and the Washington State Budget & Policy Center (www.budgetandpolicy.org), which are working together to pursue measurable improvements in kids’ lives in Washington state.

How Washington's Children Rank Among 50 States



Source: 2012 National KIDS COUNT Data Book