



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 22, 2020

Contact: Bill Byrnes

708-955-2958

bill.byrnes@ywcachicago.org

Illinois Children’s Outcomes Improved Since 2010, but Significant Barriers in Health and Well-Being and Socioeconomic Indicators by Race and Ethnicity Remain

2020 Illinois KIDS COUNT® Report Highlights Health Disparities among Illinois Children

CHICAGO — The *2020 Illinois KIDS COUNT® Report* on health released today by Voices for Illinois Children – Powered by YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago (henceforth Voices), in conjunction with the release of the national *2020 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, shows that there are significant gaps in health care for children in Illinois, especially for children of color. Both reports show that, although there have been many improvements in children’s quality of life, inequalities among children in the state persist.

The comprehensive reports illustrate the continuing needs of Illinois children, especially considering the effects of COVID-19.

The national *2020 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* looks at 16 indicators of child well-being in areas of economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Illinois’ overall national ranking slipped from 23 to 24 in the last year*.

Year	Overall Rank	Economic Well-Being Rank	Education Rank	Health Rank	Family and Community Rank
2020	24*	21	12	20*	27
2019	23	27	12	27	27
2018	22	27	13	24	27

“If nothing else, the events of the last few months have shown us that we cannot stick with the status quo,” said **Tasha Green Cruzat**, Executive Director of Voices. “We need to make sure that every child’s opportunity is a reality and not an empty promise.”

The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s national *2020 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* highlights inequalities among children in the State of Illinois. For example:

- Poverty decreased among children in all racial/ethnic groups between 2010 and 2018. However, in 2018 the percentage of black children who lived in poverty (35%) was higher than the state figure (16%) and all other racial/ethnic groups. Latinx and multiracial children also lived in poverty at higher rates than the state rate (at 20% and 18%, respectively).
- The percentage of children living in concentrated poverty (census tracts where the poverty rate was 30% or more) decreased from 2008-2012 to 2014-2018. Black children lived in concentrated poverty at a rate (34%) far outpacing both the overall state average (9%) and every other racial/ethnic group in the state. By contrast, only 2% of white children live in concentrated poverty.
- The percentage of Illinois children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment was 25% in 2018. For black children it was 47%, Latinx children 28%, and multiracial children 27%.
- 29% of Illinois children live in households that are overburdened by housing costs (i.e., they pay 30% or more of their income on housing). Black (46%), Latinx (38%), and multiracial (31%) children outpace the state rate.

“Previous research shows that poverty, along with other social factors such as housing segregation, can have significant effects on children’s health,” explained Tasha Green Cruzat. The *2020 Illinois KIDS COUNT*[®] Report released by Voices focuses on health inequalities among Illinois children. Among the findings from the Voices report:

Access to Care

- The number of uninsured children in Illinois was at its lowest in 2016 at about 71,000 (the lowest in the last decade), but had increased in 2018 to more than 102,000. Among children without health insurance, there is a significantly higher percentage of children of color without health insurance than white children.
- Survey data rating Illinois Medicaid among managed care organizations (MCOs) were generally at their lowest when it came to children getting needed care and getting it quickly.
- There are 47 counties in the state without any practicing pediatricians. Virtually all these counties are rural.

Infant Mortality and Prenatal Care

- Infant mortality among black infants (13 per 1,000 births) was consistently two times the state rate (6.1 per 1,000 births), while all other racial/ethnic groups fall below the state rate.
- 5.8% of pregnant women in Illinois received late prenatal care or no prenatal care at all. Black women received late or no care at twice that of the state rate, higher than all other racial/ethnic groups for which data were available. Black women also had preterm births and more low-weight infants more than other racial/ethnic groups.

Other Health Data

- Blood lead levels were at their highest among black children.
- Pediatric asthma emergency room visit rates (per 10,000) were, by far, highest among black children (227.21). Rates for Latinx children (54.93) and white children (36.55) were significantly lower.

The *2020 Illinois KIDS COUNT*[®] Report also contains several recommendations to address some of the issues it outlines, including mandating state agencies to collect and release data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, making additional investments in school-based health

centers (particularly in rural areas), increasing the availability of community-based mental health services, and providing more economic supports to children and their families.

“Previous research shows that health is significantly related to factors outside of children’s control: where they live, how much money comes into their households, their quality of education, the water they drink, and the air that they breathe, for example,” said **Dr. Bill Byrnes**, KIDS COUNT® project manager at Voices. “This report highlights existing disparities among both health variables and variables long considered to be important social determinants of health. Our goal is to improve children’s quality of life now so they can grow into healthier, happier adults.”

Voices for Illinois Children is a grantee of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT® program whose funding helped support the Illinois KIDS COUNT® Report.

*Direct comparisons between the 2019 and 2020 health and overall rankings are discouraged because one of the four indicators in the health domain changed.

About Voices for Illinois Children, Powered by YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago

Voices for Illinois Children champions the full development of every child in Illinois to assure the future well-being of everyone in the state. We work with families, communities, and policymakers across multiple issue areas to help children grow up healthy, happy, safe, loved and well-educated. To access a PDF of the 2020 Illinois KIDS COUNT® Report, as well as county fact sheets for all 102 of Illinois’ counties, visit www.voices4kids.org.