RACE *for* RESULTS®

BUILDING A PATHWAY TO OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN

a KIDS COUNT® policy report

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed their time and expertise to produce the latest report in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Race for Results*® series. Jean D'Amico, Nurfadila Khairunnisa, Kelvin Pollard, Nathan Porter and Alicia VanOrman of the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) developed the Race for Results index and contributed to organizing and collecting the data presented. Learn more about PRB at **www.prb.org**.

In addition, the KIDS COUNT® Network — with members representing every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands — is instrumental in making *Race for Results* available to national, state and local leaders across the country.

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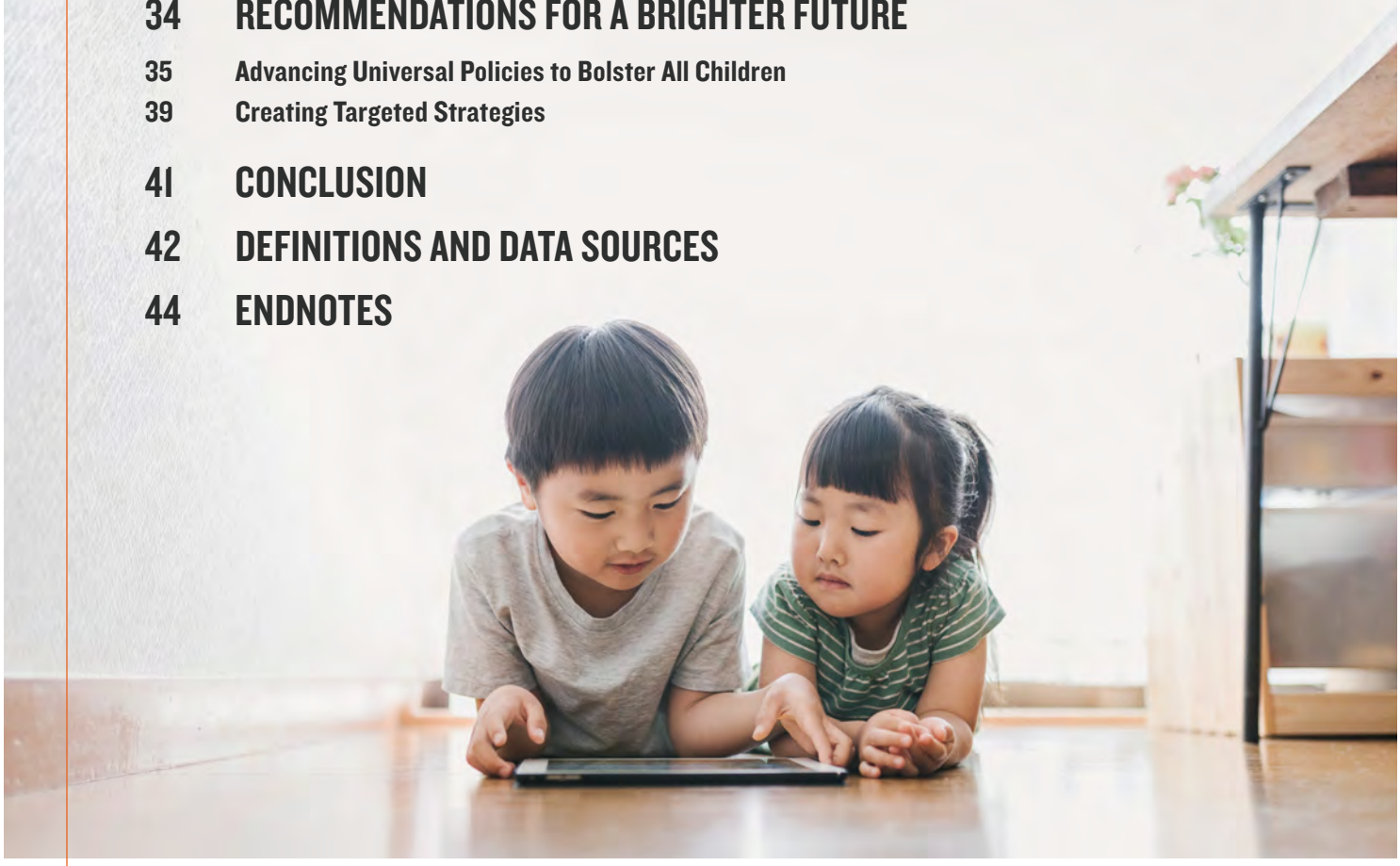


INTRODUCTION

Ten years after the Annie E. Casey Foundation published its inaugural *Race for Results* report, with its Race for Results index[1] showing large gaps in the overall well-being of children and youth across racial and ethnic groups, **new data show the nation has made progress** in some areas — but wide and historical **disparities remain for children of color**. These data demonstrate that one of the wealthiest nations in the world must do more for its children and that success for all requires targeting investments in children of color to remove long-standing barriers and address their specific needs.

As a core part of its mission, the Foundation identifies and highlights reliable data to help leaders across the country equip all young people for a brighter future. To tell a deeper story of our nation's poor performance in supporting children of color, the Foundation introduced an index of 12 child and youth well-being indicators by race and ethnicity in its 2014 report, leveraging decades of its KIDS COUNT data. The research of the Social Genome Project, which connects well-being milestones to the likelihood of a young person becoming middle class by middle age,[2] informed the selection of these indicators.

That initial report illuminated the need to address a legacy of discriminatory practices and policies so all children can succeed.[3] In 2017, the second *Race for Results* report focused on the millions of children in immigrant families in the United States and the policy shifts that could position them for success in the nation where most of them were born.[4]

This *Race for Results* report shows that well-being for young people in each of the large racial and ethnic groups has improved over the past decade on at least six of the 11 indicators for which comparisons can be made. These improvements reflect the increased attention decision-makers have paid to the circumstances and needs of our young people. They deserve both celebration and careful examination to help leaders build on what works.

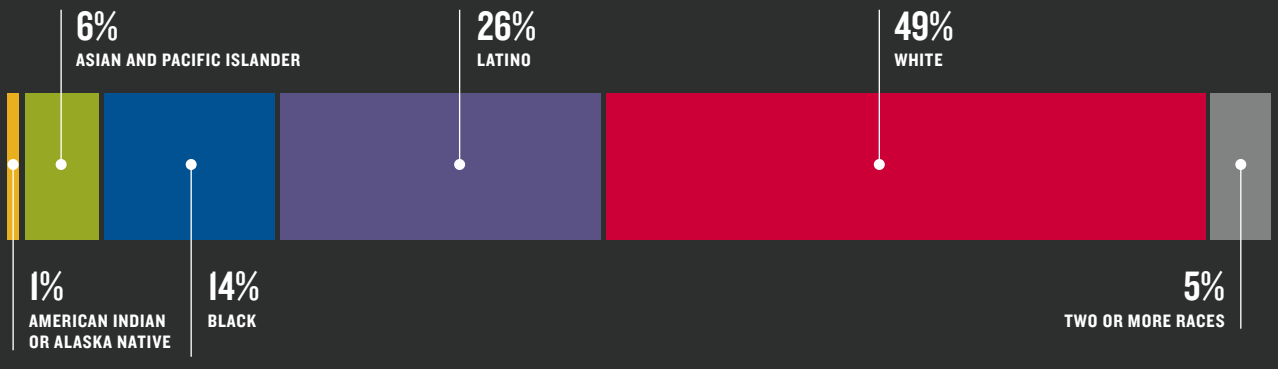
Despite this progress, the nation is not sufficiently equipping children to reach the milestones they need to succeed. The Race for Results index provides a single composite score to compare young people's progress on key milestones across the country and across racial and ethnic groups. Out of 1,000 possible index points, no racial or ethnic group came close to the maximum score, showing our country must do more to improve well-being for children of every group and eliminate obstacles on the road to adulthood.

Unfortunately, even with some improvement in well-being, unacceptable disparities remain. National index scores ranged from 386 for Black children to 771 for Asian and Pacific Islander children. Calculations of the index for all 50 states show that experiences vary widely depending on where a child lives, from a high of 877 for Asian and Pacific Islander children in New Jersey to a low of 180 for American Indian or Alaska Native children in South Dakota. Notably, Vermont, New Jersey, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine had some of the highest index scores across racial and ethnic groups and some of the narrowest gaps among racial and ethnic groups. Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine have some of the smallest populations in the country of young people of color[5] and ranked fourth, first and 12th, respectively, for overall child well-being in the *2023 KIDS COUNT Data Book*.[6] South Dakota had the lowest average Race for Results index score, followed by southwestern states, which have larger populations of children of color. South Dakota, Michigan, Illinois, Arizona, Ohio and Wisconsin had the widest differences between groups.[7]

As Figure 1 shows, youth of color are now a slight majority of young Americans.[8] One in 4 children in the United States is growing up in an immigrant family[9] — most of them are U.S.-born children of color.[10] Diversity has always been one of our country's greatest strengths. From entrepreneurship[11] and corporate life[12] to the military,[13] government[14] and civic participation,[15] people of color have made extraordinary contributions throughout the centuries in a range of fields. American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, Black and Latino people have unequivocally advanced the United States and strengthened our communities, despite the systemic barriers, duress and hardships[16] many endured.

FIGURE I

Racial and Ethnic Composition of the 72 Million Children Under Age 18 in the United States (2022)



Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Vintage 2022 population estimates.*

Notes: *Racial and Hispanic origin categories are mutually exclusive. Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

To prosper now and in years to come, our nation will continue to need the talent, intelligence and hard work of people of every race and ethnicity, whether they were born here or abroad. Yet the disparities in well-being data reflect a lack of equitable access to opportunity for children of color that poses a clear and present danger to our country's health and economic security as employers face both urgent and long-term needs for skilled labor.[17]

The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have demonstrated both the urgency of ensuring all children can thrive and the promise of policy solutions for achieving that goal. The time-limited expansion of the federal child tax credit, for example, temporarily lifted millions of families out of poverty while including a provision that allowed families to receive the full credit even if the credit was larger than the amount of tax they owed. While most of the families temporarily lifted out of poverty were families of color,[18] this policy immediately improved financial stability for families of all racial and ethnic groups.[19]

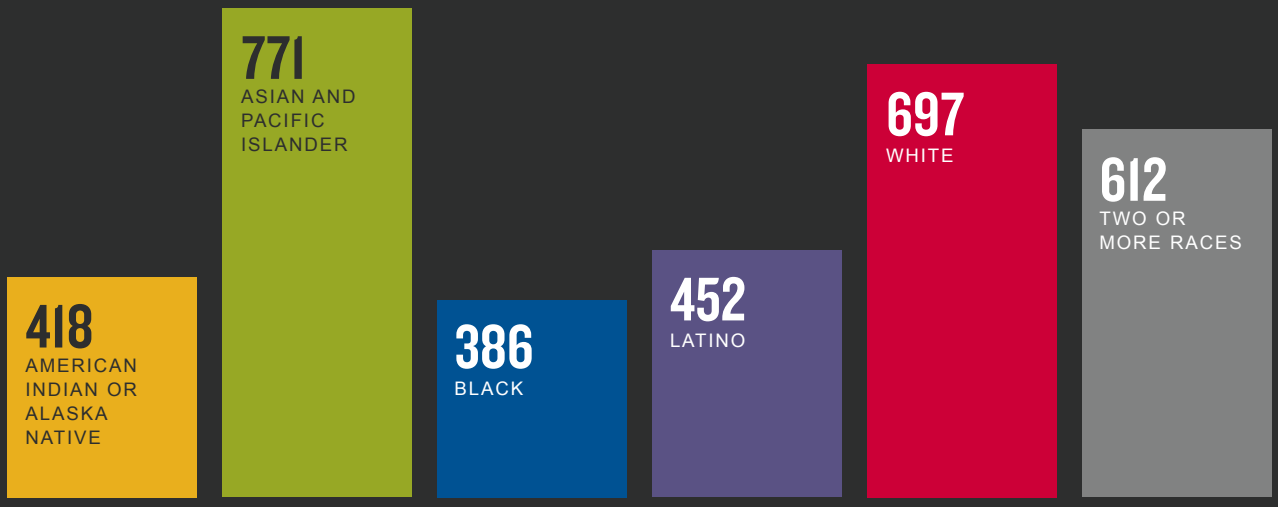
The expanded child tax credit's success in providing a more stable foundation for children is an example of the innovative solutions American leaders can develop when they follow data and evidence and act with deliberate speed. The United States is a country of great abundance, creativity and possibility — a country that can come together across divisions to define the course toward a brighter future for all its people. The data in this report can help local, state and federal leaders develop solutions that remove long-standing barriers and allow every young person to realize their full potential.

MEASURING EQUITY

The Race for Results index provides a single composite score by race and ethnicity, allowing comparisons of children's progress on key milestones nationally and by state. The index standardizes scores across 12 indicators that represent well-being milestones from cradle to career. The standard scores are converted to a scale ranging from 0 to 1,000 to facilitate comparisons and see differences across states and racial and ethnic groups. The 2024 index introduces a new group: children of two or more races, who now make up 5% of the U.S. child population.[20] This report also compares data across subgroups and, because children living in families not born in the United States can face additional barriers to success, compares their well-being with children living in U.S.-born families.

FIGURE 2

Race for Results National Index Scores (2024)



SCORES ARE OUT OF 1,000

Note: *Racial and Hispanic origin categories are mutually exclusive.*

The higher the index score, the greater the likelihood that children in that group are meeting milestones associated with success. As Figure 2 shows, Asian and Pacific Islander children have the highest index score at 771, followed by white children at 697 and children of two or more races at 612. Scores for Latino (452), American Indian or Alaska Native (418) and Black children (386) are considerably lower.

Although the composite index is helpful in providing a high-level glimpse at how individual groups are faring, it masks variations across the 12 indicators. To account for these effects, this report compares both index and indicator data across each racial and ethnic group for indicators where trend data are available. National and state index scores should not be compared from edition to edition of the *Race for Results* report series. Changes in the way some indicators are calculated affect the overall index scores. Looking at changes in individual indicators allows for an analysis of whether disparities by race and ethnicity have improved, worsened or persisted.

Table 1 displays the latest data for the 12 indicators for each racial and ethnic group, showing comparison data for 11 of 12 indicators. Most data are compared over a decade, with a few exceptions. Because of differences in the way data are calculated and variations in availability of data, indicators for healthy birth weight and on-time high school graduation have different base years, and data for females delaying childbearing cannot be compared across years. Indicators are grouped into four areas — early childhood, education and early work experiences, family resources and neighborhood context. For more information on the methodology, visit **www.aecf.org/raceforresults**.

TABLE I

Race for Results Index Indicators (Percentages)

	Year	Total	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White	Two or More Races	Children in Immigrant Families
EARLY CHILDHOOD									
Babies born at normal birth weight	2021	91.5	91.9	90.8	85.3	92.2	93.0	90.8	92.1*
Children ages 3 to 5 enrolled in nursery school, preschool or kindergarten	2017–21	58	56	61	59	53	59	59	57
EDUCATION AND EARLY WORK EXPERIENCES									
Fourth graders who scored at or above proficient in reading	2022	32	18	55	16	20	41	37	10^
Eighth graders who scored at or above proficient in math	2022	26	11	56	9	14	34	27	4^
High school students graduating on time**	2019–20	87	75	93	81	83	90	N.A.	N.A.
Young adults ages 19 to 26 who are in school or working	2017–21	84	69	90	76	82	87	84	84
Young adults ages 25 to 29 who have completed an associate degree or higher	2017–21	45	21	72	31	29	51	46	46
FAMILY RESOURCES									
Females ages 15 to 19 who delay childbearing until adulthood	2021	97	95	99	96	96	98	97	N.A.
Children who live with a householder who has at least a high school diploma	2017–21	88	87	91	89	72	95	94	75
Children who live in two-parent families	2017–21	69	50	85	39	66	78	67	81
Children living at or above 200% of poverty	2017–21	62	43	74	42	47	74	65	55
NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT									
Children who live in low-poverty areas (poverty <20%)***	2017–21	79	56	89	58	69	89	78	76

KEY: Improved | Worsened | Unchanged | Unable to Compare

N.A.: Not available

Improved, worsened or unchanged are based on comparisons between 2017–21 and 2007–11, except for babies born at normal birth weight, which compares 2021 and 2016; fourth grade reading and eighth grade math, 2022 with 2011; and on-time high school graduation, 2019–20 and 2013–14. Comparison data are not available for females who delay childbearing.

* *Data based on foreign-born status of mother.*

^ *English-language learner status is used as a proxy for children in immigrant families.*

** *State educational agencies were allowed to change requirements for a high school diploma to account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, caution should be used when interpreting changes between 2019–20 and prior years of data. Due to quality concerns and late delivery of data, the national average was calculated using imputed data for Illinois and Texas.*

*** *Racial groups American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, Black and Two or More Races include both Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations. Non-Hispanic white is the only racial group that excludes individuals identifying as Hispanic.*

OVERALL FINDINGS

The 2024 Race for Results index and its indicators tell a story of incremental progress against a backdrop of persistent disparities. These data suggest change can happen and should be encouraged on a scale that is both broader in scope and tailored to the needs of different groups of young people.

The report analyzes trends by indicator and by racial and ethnic group. Comparisons for 11 indicators with base-year data during the past decade show:[21]

- **For American Indian or Alaska Native children**, well-being improved in six indicators but declined in five. Gaps compared with the national average improved in three indicators, were unchanged in five indicators and worsened in three, suggesting the need for particular attention to these children.
- **For Asian and Pacific Islander children**, well-being improved in nine indicators and worsened in two. All indicators for Asian and Pacific Islander children except for babies born at a healthy birth weight exceed the national average. Three indicators fell closer to the national average, three improved further beyond the national average, one worsened in comparison to the national average and four remained unchanged.
- **For Black children**, well-being improved in seven indicators, worsened in three and remained constant in one. Gaps between Black children and the national average also improved in seven indicators. Even with improvements, Black children face the steepest obstacles to opportunity.
- **For Latino children**, well-being improved in seven indicators, worsened in three and was unchanged in one. When compared to the national average, Latino children saw gaps improve on nine indicators, with one indicator worsening as it fell closer to the national average and one remaining unchanged.
- **For white children**, well-being improved in six indicators, worsened in three and remained unchanged in two. All indicators for white children exceed the national average. Well-being in eight indicators fell closer to the national average, one improved further beyond the national average and two stayed the same.
- **For children of two or more races**, well-being improved in six indicators, worsened in three and stayed the same in one. (Comparison data for two or more races were not available for high school students graduating on time.)

As Table 1 shows, six indicators saw improvements across the board. Despite this, five indicators — fourth grade reading proficiency; eighth grade math proficiency; completion of an associate degree or higher; living with a family making an income at or above 200% of the poverty level; and living in a neighborhood with a low rate of poverty — showed gaps between the national average and Black, Latino and American Indian or Alaska Native children of 10 or more percentage points.[22]

EARLY CHILDHOOD

The early years of a child's life are critical to their ultimate well-being, starting from birth. Unfortunately, no group of children is making progress on the two indicators in this category, and almost every group has lost ground in both.

Being born at a weight of at least 5.5 pounds helps a child get a healthy start in life.[23] A birth weight below this threshold often accompanies preterm delivery, a condition that threatens the life of the infant and can lead to developmental issues in the child's early years and beyond.[24] Between 2016 and 2021, the percentage of babies born at a healthy birth weight stayed the same for white children (93.0%) and declined slightly among other racial and ethnic groups, with the largest drops for Asian and Pacific Islander and Black babies. Disparities in this indicator, which have persisted for decades, have many causes. Among other factors, the gaps in well-being reflect barriers to health care access in Black communities and the effects of maternal stress in part from experiencing racism.[25]

Research shows high-quality early care and education programs set the stage for future skills development, well-being and learning — particularly for those from low-income households.[26] These programs lay a vital foundation that helps kids stay in school, graduate from high school on time, pursue postsecondary education and training, and successfully transition to adulthood.[27] But many low-income children and children of color in the United States do not receive high-quality early educational experiences because their families or communities cannot access them.[28] Between 2007–11 and 2017–21, a smaller percentage of children in every racial and ethnic group was enrolled in nursery school, preschool or kindergarten, with the largest drops for Black, Asian and Pacific Islander and white children.[29] Enrollment among Latino children (53%) was the lowest of any racial or ethnic group in 2017–21. A study by the National Institute for Early Education Research found that preschool enrollment plunged during the pandemic due to safety concerns and lack of funding, with especially precipitous drops for children in low-income families.[30]

EDUCATION AND EARLY WORK EXPERIENCES

Five indicators in the Race for Results index focus on educational attainment and employment experiences for young people, starting with fourth grade reading.

For young readers, fourth grade should be the time when learning to read becomes reading to learn and a world of imagination and information opens on the page or screen. Research has shown that reading by this age and math proficiency by eighth grade are strongly connected with high school graduation, college enrollment,[31] future income and other positive benchmarks in adulthood.[32] If all adults achieved a minimum level of literacy, the U.S. gross domestic product would increase by 10%, contributing an additional $2.2 trillion per year, according to research.[33]

As a nation, however, we are failing to ensure children, especially children of color, are proficient in these basics — a deeply concerning trend that worsened during the pandemic. In 2022, the most recent year for which reliable data were available, just 32% of fourth graders were proficient in reading, wiping out incremental progress made over the previous decade.[34] Roughly 1 out of 6 American Indian or Alaska Native and Black fourth graders were proficient readers. Even though reading rates improved for Asians and Pacific Islanders and Latinos between 2011 and 2022, just 55% of Asian and Pacific Islander fourth graders and 20% of Latino fourth graders were reading proficiently in 2022.

In 2022, a little over a quarter (26%) of the nation's eighth graders were proficient in math. Only Asian and Pacific Islander eighth graders (56%) saw rates above 50%.

Roughly 1 in 10 Black and American Indian or Alaska Native eighth graders and 1 in 7 Latino eighth graders were proficient in math. Between 2011 and 2022, math proficiency in eighth grade declined for every group besides Asians and Pacific Islanders. Rates declined by nine percentage points for white young people, though they remained above the national average, and by 10 percentage points for children of two or more races.

Despite these worrying trends, this category includes bright spots. Three indicators focused on teenagers and young adults showed improvement across racial and ethnic groups. Every group made gains in the key benchmark of graduating from high school on time compared with 2013–14, with the largest improvements for Black and Latino youth. While this indicator improved for American Indians or Alaska Natives, just 75% of young people in this group graduated on time in 2019–20 — 12 percentage points below the national average.

In 2017–21, an average of 84% of young people ages 19 to 26 were enrolled in school or working. Lower percentages of American Indian or Alaska Native (69%), Black (76%) and Latino (82%) young adults reported working or being in school than the national average.[35] These disparities have persisted over the past decade, but each racial and ethnic group had a greater percentage of young people working or in school compared with 2007–11. This indicator improved five percentage points for Latino and Black youth and by four percentage points for American Indian or Alaska Native youth and youth of two or more races.

Earning at least an associate degree by age 29 paves the way for young people's financial stability in the future, equipping them to support their own children if they choose to have them. Making sure young people can attain this level of education is key to ensuring that the United States has a skilled labor force available to sustain a robust economy. This indicator also showed across-the-board improvement in 2017–21, with Latinos making gains of 11 percentage points compared with 2007–11. But even with gains over time, only 21% of American Indian or Alaska Native youth had completed an associate degree or higher in 2017–21 — less than half the national average of 45%. Similarly, only 29% of Latino youth and 31% of Black youth had attained a postsecondary degree. These data show the need for targeted solutions in attracting and supporting students of color in educational experiences after high school and the importance of creating strong connections between secondary schools and postsecondary institutions.

FAMILY RESOURCES

The health and well-being of children is inextricably linked with their parents' financial stability and with their family relationships, which provide access to knowledge, support and networks along with financial resources. Together, the four indicators in this category capture these essential linkages: delaying childbearing until adulthood, living with a householder who has at least a high school diploma, living in a two-parent family and living in a family with income at or above 200% of the federal poverty level.

Adolescent mothers and their babies face health risks,[36] along with the challenges of financially supporting children at the same time they are completing their own education.[37] In 2021, 97% of females between ages 15 and 19 had delayed childbearing. Across index indicators, the most recent results for delayed childbearing were most consistent across groups, with small gaps between Black, Latino or American Indian or Alaska Native adolescent mothers and the national average. (Comparison data across years were not available for this indicator.)

While the federal poverty level is an economic measure used to decide whether a family's income qualifies them for certain benefits and programs, research has shown that it takes at least twice this amount for families to meet their basic needs.[38] Nearly 9 million adults in the United States work full time but do not make enough money to rise above the poverty level.[39] When children spend their early years living in a family that earns at least 200% of the federal poverty level — $54,958 for a family of four with two children in 2021[40] — they are more likely to score higher in reading and math[41] and experience healthy development,[42] with pronounced positive effects for children of color.[43] Children whose families meet this income level when they are young also have a higher likelihood of earning more as adults and are less likely to suffer from poor health.[44] Research shows that increases of as little as $3,000 per year in income can make a big difference in a low-income family's trajectory and in children's future earnings as adults.[45]

While progress has been made over the past 10 years, with gains among every racial and ethnic group, too few families are meeting this level of financial well-being. On average, only 62% of children lived in families earning 200% or more of the federal poverty level in 2017–21.[46] Wide disparities continued, with just 42% of Black, 43% of American Indian or Alaska Native and 47% of Latino children living at or above this income level.[47]

Sixty-nine percent of children lived in two-parent families in 2017–21. While the national average for this indicator was unchanged compared with 2007–11, a smaller portion of American Indian or Alaska Native children (50%) lived in two-parent families. The percentage of Black children in two-parent families improved slightly but remained far behind the national average at 39%.

Compared with 2007–11, a greater portion of children lived with a householder who had at least a high school diploma, an indicator that improved across groups. Even with improvements, the rate for Latino children (72%) continued to fall far below the national average of 88%.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Where a child grows up matters to their future development. Young people must be able to get an education, play and work in safety and have access to good schools, supportive programs, resources and adults to help them learn and grow. The percentage of children living in low-poverty areas, where less than 20% of people have incomes below the poverty level, helps gauge the nation's progress on this important factor in a young person's life. Research shows a high correlation between the poverty rate in children's neighborhoods and their later economic success[48] and has documented that compounding effects from concentrated poverty for children begin to appear when more than 20% of a neighborhood's population lives in poverty.[49] Historical practices and policies have led to high concentrations of families of color in high-poverty neighborhoods, fueled by chronic disinvestment in those communities.[50]

A study shows that children who move from high-poverty areas to neighborhoods with lower rates of poverty before age 13 were more likely to go to college and earned an average of 31% more than those who did not move.[51] Yet with persistent high housing and rent prices, many low-income families cannot afford to move — and relocation can disrupt a child's friendships, school, relationships with extended family members and other important connections.

In 2017–21, the percentage of children living in low-poverty neighborhoods increased for all racial and ethnic groups compared with 2007–11, with a jump of 12 percentage points for Latino children. But even with that improvement, Latino families lived in low-poverty neighborhoods at a rate 10 percentage points below the national average. The data were worse for Black and American Indian or Alaska Native families, who lived in low-poverty neighborhoods at rates more than 20 percentage points below the national average.

KEY MILESTONES

by race and ethnicity

TABLE 2

Race for Results Index Scores (2024)

Location	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latino	White	Two or More Races
United States	418	771	386	452	697	612
Alabama	683	728	333	351	632	551
Alaska	337	523	S	567	696	587
Arizona	291	780	439	413	685	629
Arkansas	616	624	299	397	597	562
California	532	797	461	457	739	690
Colorado	505	741	502	453	744	649
Connecticut	S	800	461	452	793	743
Delaware	S	804	424	425	696	568
Florida	546	792	408	551	697	628
Georgia	518	775	406	409	674	596
Hawaii	S	594	711	557	732	632
Idaho	422	691	S	442	659	609
Illinois	S	837	341	501	740	637
Indiana	S	707	349	457	659	537
Iowa	547	704	403	505	720	578
Kansas	659	747	381	441	690	562
Kentucky	S	667	341	412	575	501
Louisiana	500	683	285	411	623	512
Maine	S	750	494	715	657	648
Maryland	S	808	499	434	768	674
Massachusetts	S	843	516	429	798	723
Michigan	565	800	268	479	660	515
Minnesota	347	624	400	496	760	602
Mississippi	S	700	306	398	615	501
Missouri	S	769	328	495	649	548
Montana	309	S	S	542	667	559
Nebraska	443	646	353	426	740	576
Nevada	452	670	326	407	662	555
New Hampshire	S	763	531	560	720	730
New Jersey	676	877	465	511	798	729
New Mexico	344	632	452	405	606	552
New York	515	717	404	441	731	667
North Carolina	398	763	391	398	696	552
North Dakota	318	S	490	563	727	575
Ohio	S	757	288	455	658	495
Oklahoma	471	653	380	372	589	498
Oregon	490	714	468	444	649	636
Pennsylvania	528	767	333	387	705	543
Rhode Island	S	714	470	385	738	586
South Carolina	S	747	336	412	666	498
South Dakota	180	S	564	422	723	502
Tennessee	S	756	325	380	640	509
Texas	666	807	435	428	713	631
Utah	480	666	539	489	739	704
Vermont	S	678	626	723	683	723
Virginia	S	820	450	487	734	685
Washington	483	744	525	447	704	660
West Virginia	S	S	417	568	509	513
Wisconsin	514	654	273	483	742	602
Wyoming	313	S	S	516	657	562

S: Suppressed *Note: Racial and Hispanic origin categories are mutually exclusive.*

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE CHILDREN

American Indian or Alaska Native children included in this analysis are not Hispanic and not identified with any other racial group. Under this definition, 566,000 American Indian or Alaska Native children live in the United States, or 1% of the total child population.[52] These numbers do not include children who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native in combination with another race. In 2017–21, 96% of American Indian or Alaska Native children lived in U.S.-born families.

GEOGRAPHY

American Indian or Alaska Native children face some of the steepest barriers to success of any group in this analysis. Of the 31 states for which data were reported, those in which American Indian or Alaska Native children have the highest levels of well-being are spread out across the country. American Indian or Alaska Native children are relatively better off in states as disparate as Alabama (683), New Jersey (676), Texas (666), Kansas (659) and Arkansas (616).

The map (page 18) illustrates that significantly fewer American Indian or Alaska Native children are meeting milestones in the Upper Midwest, the Southwest, the Mountain States, North Carolina and Alaska. Many of these states have large populations of American Indian or Alaska Native children. At 180, the score for this group of children in South Dakota is the lowest of any racial and ethnic group in any state. As it was in the original 2014 Race for Results index, the range of scores for American Indian or Alaska Native children in 2024 — 180 in South Dakota to 683 in Alabama — is the widest in the index.

INTRAGROUP DIFFERENCES

Just as other children's well-being can differ based on immigrant status, the well-being of American Indian or Alaska Native children differs considerably based on tribal affiliation. For example, only 36% of Pueblo children lived in two-parent households in 2017–21, compared to 64% of Choctaw children. Data

also show that more than half of Cherokee, Choctaw and Creek children live in families with incomes at or above 200% of poverty, compared with 28% of Apache children.

Alaska Native children tend to fare better than American Indian children. For example, 51% of Alaska Native children lived at or above 200% of poverty in 2017–21, compared to 41% of American Indian children. On the other hand, just 10% of Alaska Native young adults have completed an associate degree or higher, compared with 22% of American Indian young adults. Differences in well-being occur within subgroups of Alaska Native children. While 75% of Tlingit-Haida and 73% of Aleut children live at or above 200% of poverty, only 36% of Yup'ik children do.

Children Living at or Above 200% of Poverty (2017–21)

by Nine Largest American Indian Tribal Affiliations

Apache	28%
Cherokee	53%
Chippewa	41%
Choctaw	56%
Creek	51%
Lumbee	42%
Navajo	30%
Pueblo	38%
Sioux	31%

by Six Largest Alaska Native Affiliations

Alaskan Athabascan	66%
Aleut	73%
Inupiat	53%
Other Alaska Native	52%
Tlingit-Haida	75%
Yup'ik	36%

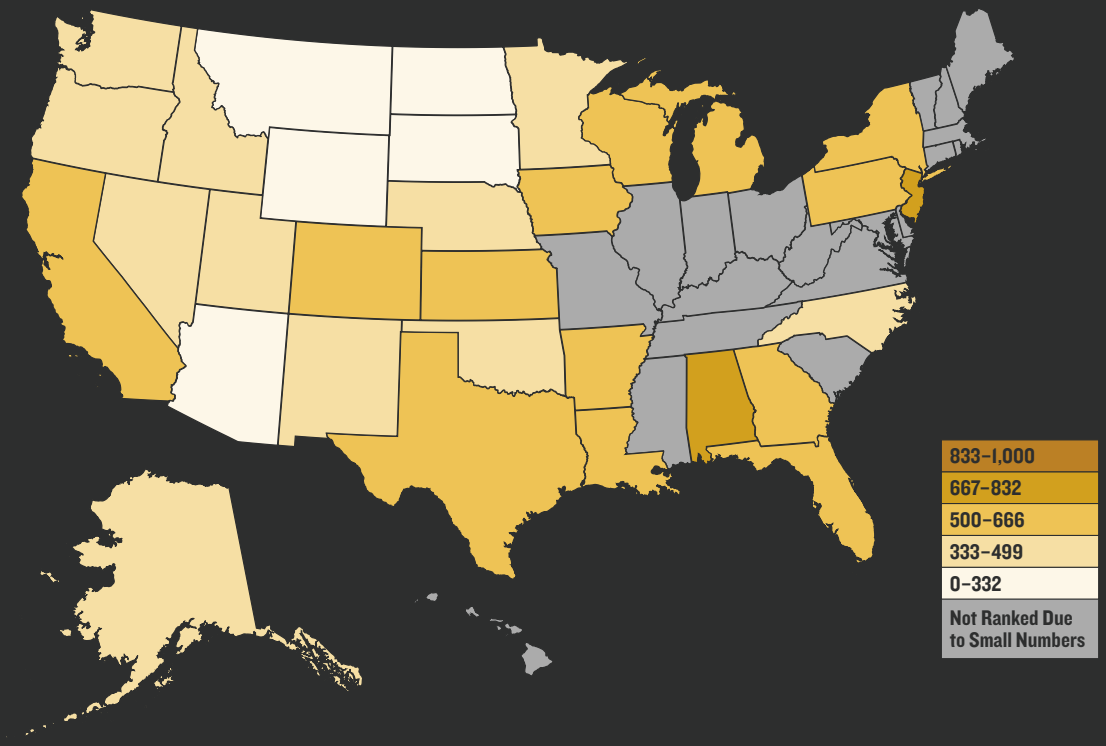
Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

Note: *Data are for non-Hispanic children.*

RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX SCORES

A State-to-State Comparison of Well-Being for

American Indian or Alaska Native Children



STATE RANKINGS

1. Alabama *683*
2. New Jersey *676*
3. Texas *666*
4. Kansas *659*
5. Arkansas *616*
6. Michigan *565*
7. Iowa *547*
8. Florida *546*
9. California *532*
10. Pennsylvania *528*
11. Georgia *518*
12. New York *515*
13. Wisconsin *514*
14. Colorado *505*
15. Louisiana *500*
16. Oregon *490*
17. Washington *483*
18. Utah *480*
19. Oklahoma *471*
20. Nevada *452*
21. Nebraska *443*
22. Idaho *422*
23. North Carolina *398*
24. Minnesota *347*
25. New Mexico *344*
26. Alaska *337*
27. North Dakota *318*
28. Wyoming *313*
29. Montana *309*
30. Arizona *291*
31. South Dakota *180*

Connecticut
Delaware
Hawaii
Illinois
Indiana
Kentucky
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Mississippi
Missouri
New Hampshire
Ohio
Rhode Island
South Carolina
Tennessee
Vermont
Virginia
West Virginia

ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER CHILDREN

Asian and Pacific Islander populations include 4 million children of Asian descent and 158,000 Pacific Islander children, representing 6% of all children in the United States.[53] As with all racial groups in this analysis, Asian and Pacific Islander children included here are not of Hispanic origin and are identified with one racial category. Most (87%) Asian and Pacific Islander children in the United States live in immigrant families.

GEOGRAPHY

State Race for Results index scores for Asian and Pacific Islander children are consistently among the highest across all groups. Asian and Pacific Islander children in New Jersey had the highest score at 877. Even among the lowest-scoring states, only Alaska (523) and Hawaii (594) scored below 600.

INTRAGROUP DIFFERENCES

Different subgroups of Asian children vary substantially in the barriers they experience. Of the 10 largest Asian subgroups, Asian Indian (88%), Japanese (84%) and Filipino (82%) children are the most likely to live in families with incomes at or above 200% of poverty. At the other end of the spectrum, Burmese and Bangladeshi children are least likely to have high scores on this critical indicator related to economic stability. Only 27% of Burmese and 47% of Bangladeshi children live at or above 200% of poverty. Additionally, less than one-third (26%) of Burmese young adults and slightly more than one-third (37%) of Hmong young adults completed an associate degree or higher, compared with 87% of Asian Indian young adults.

IMMIGRANT STATUS

Immigrant status has a mixed effect on the well-being of Asian and Pacific Islander children. Children who are native English speakers, for example, are much more likely to be proficient in reading by fourth grade and in math by eighth grade. Asian and Pacific Islander children from immigrant families are significantly more likely to live in two-parent families. Eighty-nine percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children in immigrant families live in two-parent families, compared to 61% of those in U.S.-born families.

Outcomes for Asian and Pacific Islander Children
by Immigrant Status

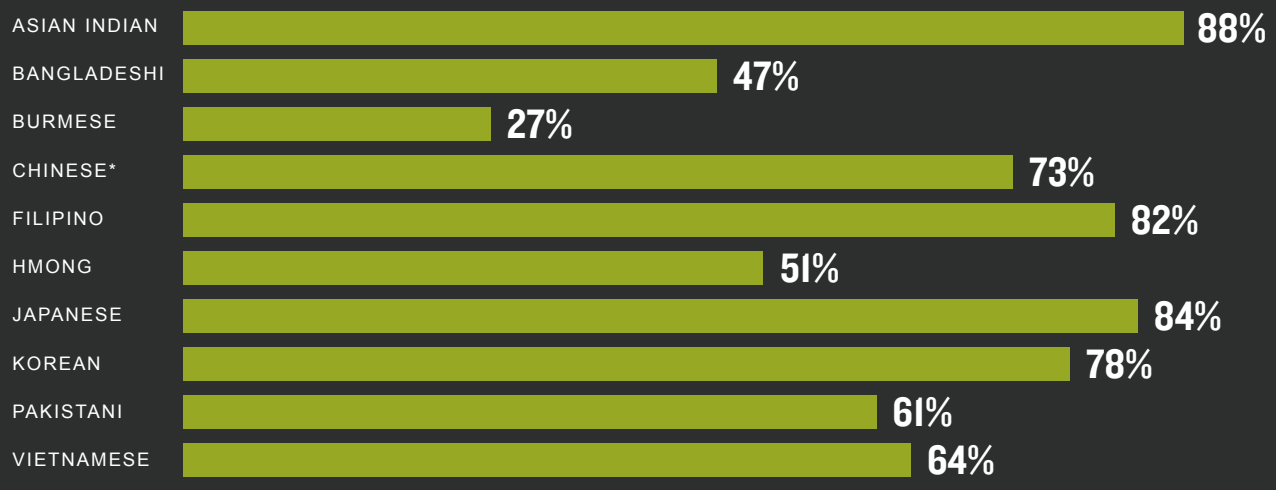
	Year	Children in U.S.-Born Families	Children in Immigrant Families
Fourth graders who scored at or above proficient in reading*	2022	65%	23%
Eighth graders who scored at or above proficient in math*	2022	61%	15%
Children who live in two-parent families	2017–21	61%	89%

Sources: Reading and Math Proficiency: *U.S. Department of Education, 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress;* ***Two-Parent Families****: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

Note: *Includes only non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander children.*

**English-language learner status is used as a proxy for children in immigrant families.*

Children Living at or Above 200% of Poverty
by 10 Largest Groups of Origin (2017–21)



Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

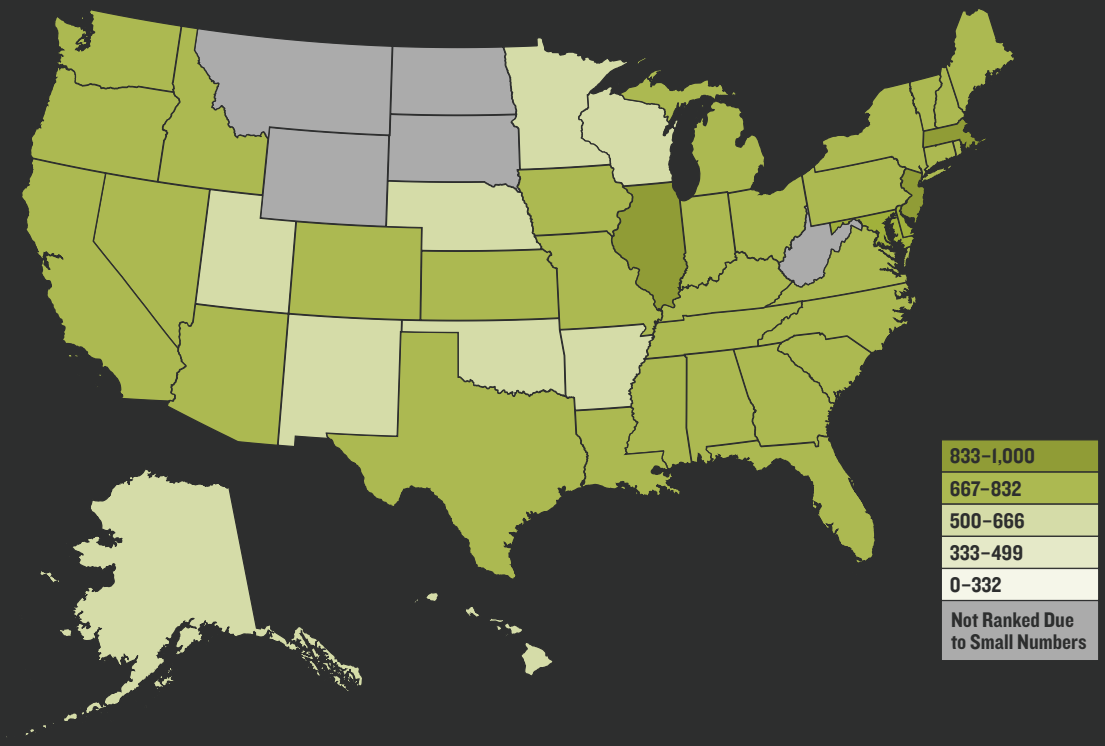
Note: *Data are for non-Hispanic children.*

**Except Taiwanese*

RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX SCORES

A State-to-State Comparison of Well-Being for

Asian and Pacific Islander Children



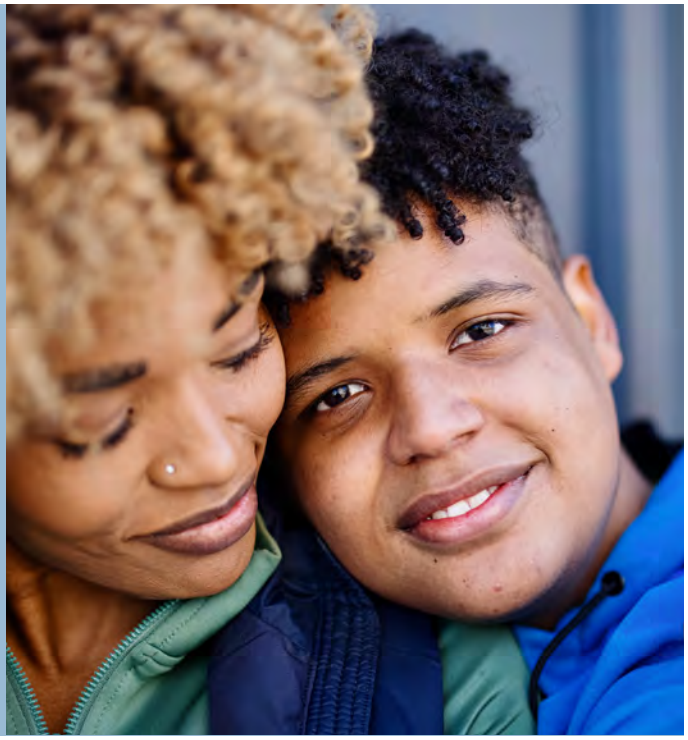
STATE RANKINGS

1. New Jersey *877*
2. Massachusetts *843*
3. Illinois *837*
4. Virginia *820*
5. Maryland *808*
6. Texas *807*
7. Delaware *804*
8. Connecticut *800*
8. Michigan *800*
10. California *797*
11. Florida *792*
12. Arizona *780*
13. Georgia *775*
14. Missouri *769*
15. Pennsylvania *767*
16. New Hampshire *763*
16. North Carolina *763*
18. Ohio *757*
19. Tennessee *756*
20. Maine *750*
21. Kansas *747*
21. South Carolina *747*
23. Washington *744*
24. Colorado *741*
25. Alabama *728*
26. New York *717*
27. Oregon *714*
27. Rhode Island *714*
29. Indiana *707*
30. Iowa *704*
31. Mississippi *700*
32. Idaho *691*
33. Louisiana *683*
34. Vermont *678*
35. Nevada *670*
36. Kentucky *667*
37. Utah *666*
38. Wisconsin *654*
39. Oklahoma *653*
40. Nebraska *646*
41. New Mexico *632*
42. Arkansas *624*
42. Minnesota *624*
44. Hawaii *594*
45. Alaska *523*

Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
West Virginia
Wyoming

BLACK CHILDREN

In 2022, 10.1 million Black children under age 18 lived in the United States, representing 14% of the total child population.[54] Children included here are not Hispanic. Black children live in all regions of the country but remain most highly concentrated in the southeastern United States. Most Black children in the United States (83%) live in U.S.-born families.[55]



GEOGRAPHY

While some indicators have improved, the national index score for Black children is the lowest in the Race for Results index, demonstrating that much more must be done to position them for success. Although scores vary across states, regions and domains, in nearly all states, Black children face some of the biggest barriers to success. The 2024 index scores range from a low of 268 in Michigan to a high of 711 in Hawaii. States scoring the lowest on the 2024 index for Black children are clustered in the Upper Midwest and South. States with the best well-being scores for Black children include Vermont (626), South Dakota (564), Utah (539) and New Hampshire (531). Like Hawaii, however, these states have relatively small Black populations.

IMMIGRANT STATUS

Immigrant status is an important issue for Black children, given the historical influx of immigrants from the Caribbean and the more recent arrival of people from a variety of African nations. Black children in immigrant families outperform their native-born counterparts in seven of the 10 indicators for which data by immigration status were available. Black children in immigrant families are more than twice as likely to live in two-parent families than Black children in U.S.-born families (69% vs. 33%, respectively). Black children in immigrant families also were more likely to live in low-poverty areas compared to Black children in U.S.-born families (71% vs. 55%, respectively). Even so, reading proficiency levels among Black fourth graders in immigrant families are lower than their native-born counterparts (13% vs. 16%).

Outcomes for Black Children
by Immigrant Status

	Year	Children in U.S.-Born Families	Children in Immigrant Families
Fourth graders who scored at or above proficient in reading*^	2022	16%	13%
Children who live in two-parent families*	2017–21	33%	69%
Children who live in low-poverty areas (poverty <20%)**	2017–21	55%	71%

Sources: Reading Proficiency: *U.S. Department of Education, 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress;*
Two-Parent Families and Low-Poverty Areas*: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

** Includes only non-Hispanic Black children.*

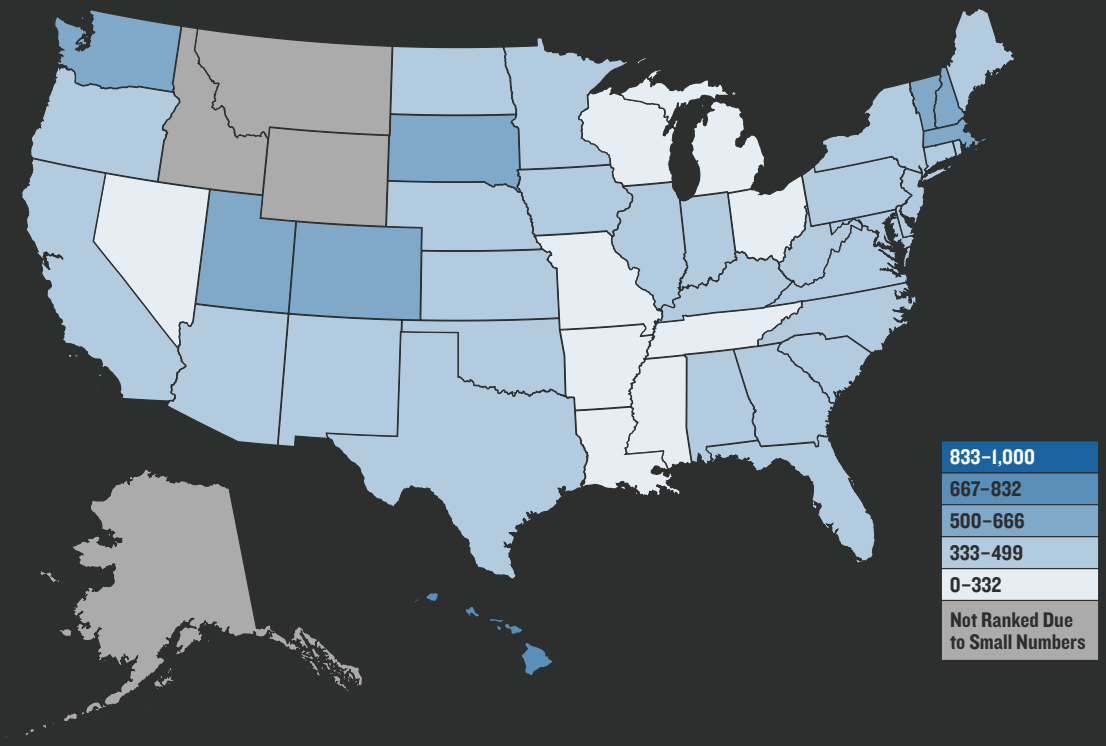
^ English-language learner status is used as a proxy for children in immigrant families.

*** Includes Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black children.*

RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX SCORES

A State-to-State Comparison of Well-Being for

Black Children



STATE RANKINGS

1. Hawaii *711*
2. Vermont *626*
3. South Dakota *564*
4. Utah *539*
5. New Hampshire *531*
6. Washington *525*
7. Massachusetts *516*
8. Colorado *502*
9. Maryland *499*
10. Maine *494*
11. North Dakota *490*
12. Rhode Island *470*
13. Oregon *468*
14. New Jersey *465*
15. California *461*
15. Connecticut *461*
17. New Mexico *452*
18. Virginia *450*
19. Arizona *439*
20. Texas *435*
21. Delaware *424*
22. West Virginia *417*
23. Florida *408*
24. Georgia *406*
25. New York *404*
26. Iowa *403*
27. Minnesota *400*
28. North Carolina *391*
29. Kansas *381*
30. Oklahoma *380*
31. Nebraska *353*
32. Indiana *349*
33. Illinois *341*
33. Kentucky *341*
35. South Carolina *336*
36. Alabama *333*
36. Pennsylvania *333*
38. Missouri *328*
39. Nevada *326*
40. Tennessee *325*
41. Mississippi *306*
42. Arkansas *299*
43. Ohio *288*
44. Louisiana *285*
45. Wisconsin *273*
46. Michigan *268*

Alaska
Idaho
Montana
Wyoming

LATINO CHILDREN

There are 18.8 million Latino children in the United States, representing 26% of the country's child population. Because Latino is considered an ethnicity, children in this group can be of any racial category. Latino children live in every region of the country. They represent more than half of the children in California and New Mexico, nearly half the children in Texas (49%) and nearly a third in Florida (32%).[56] More than half (51%) of Latino children in the United States live in immigrant families.[57] Although they face many of the same cultural barriers of children in immigrant families, children who come from Puerto Rico to the mainland are U.S. citizens by virtue of their birth in a U.S. territory. More than 1.7 million Latino children in the United States are Puerto Rican.[58]

GEOGRAPHY

While progress has been made across the nation for Latino children on some key indicators, 2024 Race for Results index scores show states must build on that progress to ensure this group of young people has opportunities to succeed. Only 13 states had index scores above 500, with the highest scores in Vermont (723) and Maine (715) — places with relatively small populations of Latino youth[59] — far outdistancing the next highest states: West Virginia (568), Alaska (567) and North Dakota (563). States with the lowest scores — Alabama (351), Oklahoma (372) and Tennessee (380) — were in the South and Southwest.

INTRAGROUP DIFFERENCES

Of the 10 largest Latino and Hispanic subgroups, young people from Colombia, Spain and Cuba are the most likely to live in families with incomes at or above 200% of poverty and to have completed an associate degree or higher. Families and young people from Honduras and Guatemala were least likely to attain those benchmarks of financial stability.[60]

IMMIGRANT STATUS

On nearly every measure in the index, Latino children in immigrant families have steep obstacles in connecting to opportunity. While 29% of Latino fourth graders in U.S.-born families read proficiently in 2022, just 8% of those in immigrant families could. Latino children in immigrant families are more likely to live in two-parent families than those in U.S.-born families (77% vs. 54%).

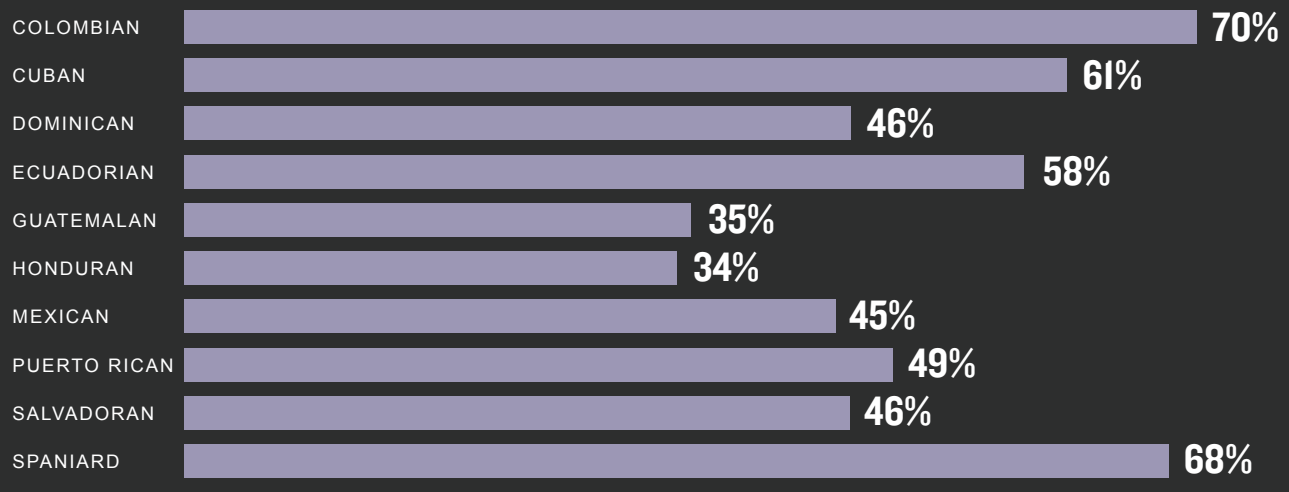
Outcomes for Latino Children
by Immigrant Status

	Year	Children in U.S.-Born Families	Children in Immigrant Families
Fourth graders who scored at or above proficient in reading*	2022	29%	8%
Children who live with a householder who has at least a high school diploma	2017–21	84%	60%
Children who live in two-parent families	2017–21	54%	77%

Sources: Reading Proficiency: *U.S. Department of Education, 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress;* ***Householder Educational Attainment and Two-Parent Families:*** *U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

**English-language learner status is used as a proxy for children in immigrant families.*

Children Living at or Above 200% of Poverty
by 10 Largest Groups of Origin (2017–21)

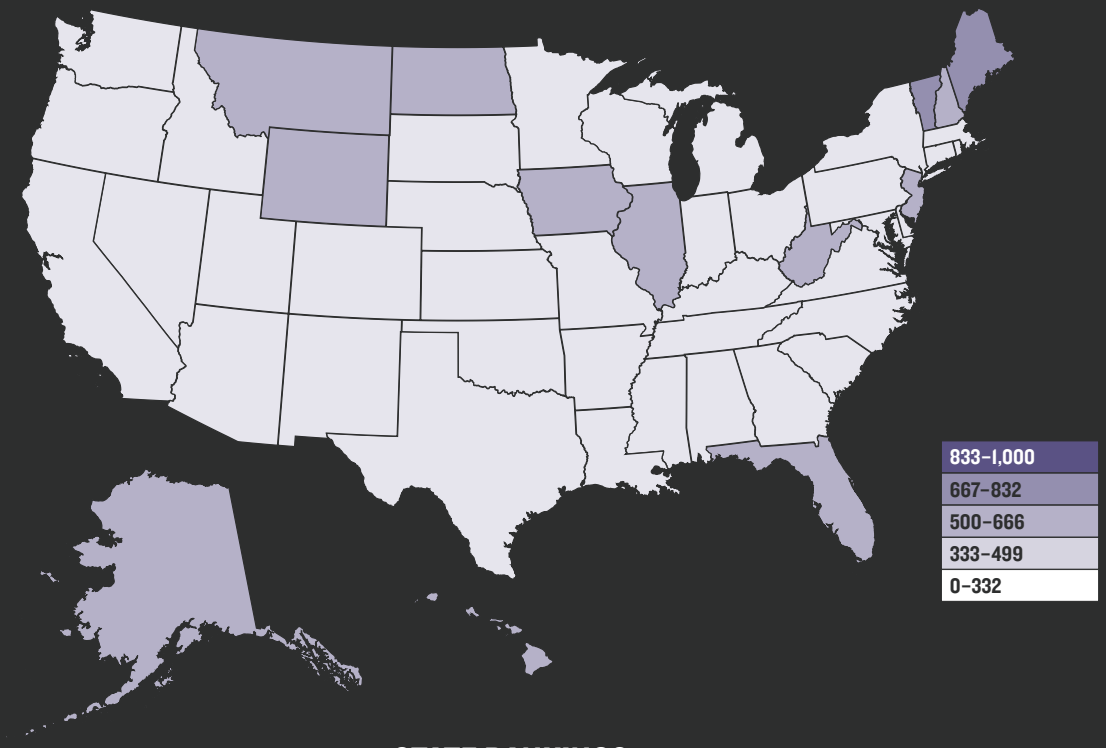


Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX SCORES

A State-to-State Comparison of Well-Being for

Latino Children



STATE RANKINGS

1. Vermont *723*
2. Maine *715*
3. West Virginia *568*
4. Alaska *567*
5. North Dakota *563*
6. New Hampshire *560*
7. Hawaii *557*
8. Florida *551*
9. Montana *542*
10. Wyoming *516*
11. New Jersey *511*
12. Iowa *505*
13. Illinois *501*
14. Minnesota *496*
15. Missouri *495*
16. Utah *489*
17. Virginia *487*
18. Wisconsin *483*
19. Michigan *479*
20. California *457*
20. Indiana *457*
22. Ohio *455*
23. Colorado *453*
24. Connecticut *452*
25. Washington *447*
26. Oregon *444*
27. Idaho *442*
28. Kansas *441*
28. New York *441*
30. Maryland *434*
31. Massachusetts *429*
32. Texas *428*
33. Nebraska *426*
34. Delaware *425*
35. South Dakota *422*
36. Arizona *413*
37. Kentucky *412*
37. South Carolina *412*
39. Louisiana *411*
40. Georgia *409*
41. Nevada *407*
42. New Mexico *405*
43. Mississippi *398*
43. North Carolina *398*
45. Arkansas *397*
46. Pennsylvania *387*
47. Rhode Island *385*
48. Tennessee *380*
49. Oklahoma *372*
50. Alabama *351*

WHITE CHILDREN

In 2022, white children represented 49% of the U.S. child population. The 35.4 million white children included in this analysis are not Hispanic and identified as white alone.[61] Ninety-two percent of white children in the United States live in U.S.-born families.[62]

GEOGRAPHY

Among the racial groups, along with Asian and Pacific Islander children, white children have the highest index scores across states. The northeastern states of Massachusetts (798), New Jersey (798) and Connecticut (793) hold the top three scores for white children on the 2024 Race for Results index, followed by Maryland (768) and Minnesota (760). The 10 lowest-scoring states are overwhelmingly in the Southeast and Southwest, and include West Virginia (509), Kentucky (575), Oklahoma (589), Arkansas (597) and New Mexico (606). No state's index score for white children fell below 500. Along with children of two or more races, white children had the narrowest range of index scores across the country.

IMMIGRANT STATUS

Well-being results for white children in immigrant families resemble those of immigrants in other racial groups. On average, white children who are non-native English speakers are about seven times less likely to be proficient in math. White children in immigrant families are more likely than those in U.S.-born families to live in two-parent families (90% vs. 77%, respectively) and to have completed an associate degree or higher as young adults (62% vs. 50%).

Outcomes for White Children
by Immigrant Status

	Year	Children in U.S.-Born Families	Children in Immigrant Families
Eighth graders who scored at or above proficient in math*	**2022**	**35%**	**5%**
Young adults ages 25 to 29 who have completed an associate degree or higher	**2017–21**	**50%**	**62%**
Children who live in two-parent families	**2017–21**	**77%**	**90%**

Sources: Math Proficiency: *U.S. Department of Education, 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress****; Associate Degree or Higher and Two-Parent Families:*** *U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

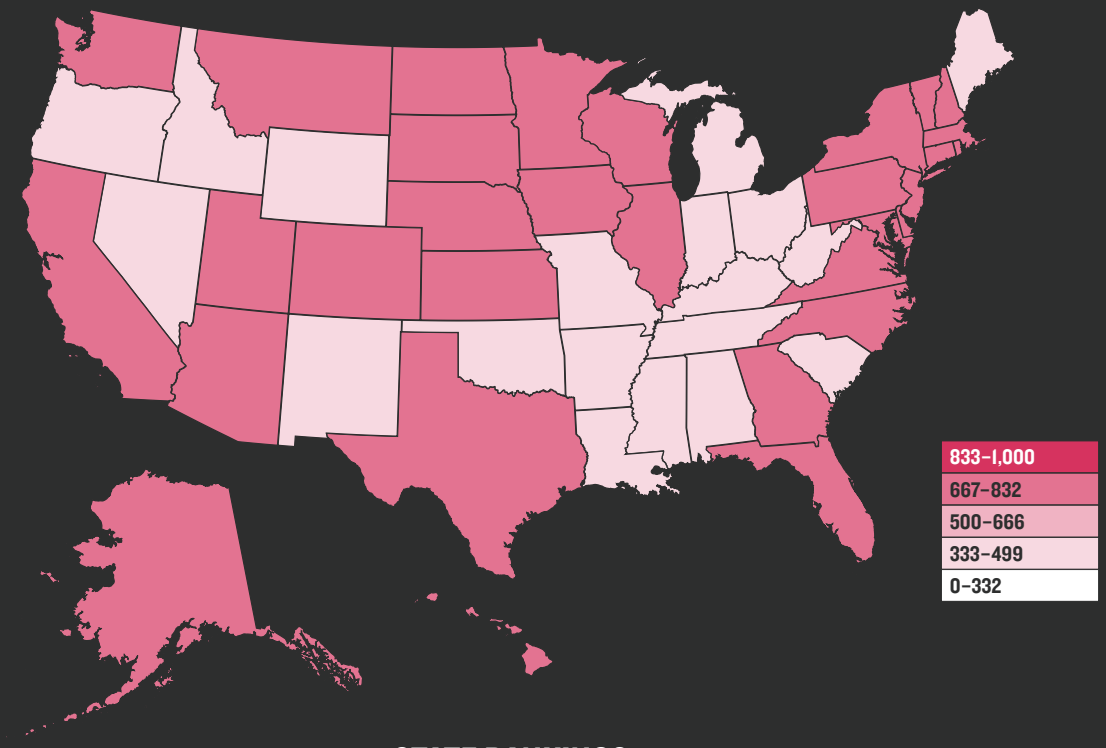
Note: *Includes only non-Hispanic white children.*

**English-language learner status is used as a proxy for children in immigrant families.*

RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX SCORES

A State-to-State Comparison of Well-Being for

White Children



STATE RANKINGS

1. Massachusetts *798*
1. New Jersey *798*
3. Connecticut *793*
4. Maryland *768*
5. Minnesota *760*
6. Colorado *744*
7. Wisconsin *742*
8. Illinois *740*
8. Nebraska *740*
10. California *739*
10. Utah *739*
12. Rhode Island *738*
13. Virginia *734*
14. Hawaii *732*
15. New York *731*
16. North Dakota *727*
17. South Dakota *723*
18. Iowa *720*
18. New Hampshire *720*
20. Texas *713*
21. Pennsylvania *705*
22. Washington *704*
23. Florida *697*
24. Alaska *696*
24. Delaware *696*
24. North Carolina *696*
27. Kansas *690*
28. Arizona *685*
29. Vermont *683*
30. Georgia *674*
31. Montana *667*
32. South Carolina *666*
33. Nevada *662*
34. Michigan *660*
35. Idaho *659*
35. Indiana *659*
37. Ohio *658*
38. Maine *657*
38. Wyoming *657*
40. Missouri *649*
40. Oregon *649*
42. Tennessee *640*
43. Alabama *632*
44. Louisiana *623*
45. Mississippi *615*
46. New Mexico *606*
47. Arkansas *597*
48. Oklahoma *589*
49. Kentucky *575*
50. West Virginia *509*

CHILDREN OF TWO OR MORE RACES

This category includes young people listed as identifying with two or more racial categories. About 3.5 million children living in the United States — 5% of the national child population — are counted within this group.[63] As with all racial groups in this analysis, children included here are not of Hispanic origin. The analysis assumes children in this category are not counted in other racial categories. Most (79%) children of two or more races in the United States live in U.S.-born families.[64]

GEOGRAPHY

The national 2024 Race for Results index score for children of two or more races was 612, with state scores that were the most consistent across the country of any group. Scores ranged from lows of 495 in Ohio and 498 in Oklahoma and South Carolina to highs in northeastern states including Connecticut (743), New Hampshire (730), New Jersey (729) and Massachusetts and Vermont (both 723).

INTRAGROUP DIFFERENCES

Of the 10 largest two or more races' subgroups, children who identified as white and Chinese or as white and Asian Indian had the highest levels of well-being as measured by the indicators. They are the most likely to live at or above 200% of poverty (91% and 90%, respectively), to have an associate degree or higher (80% for both) and to live in two-parent families (89% and 87%, respectively). Those who identified as white and Black had some of the worst scores. Only 39% of young adults who identified as white and Black had completed an associate degree or higher. Only 49% of children who identified as white, Black and American Indian or Alaska Native lived at or above 200% of poverty.

IMMIGRANT STATUS

In general, children in immigrant families who identify with two or more races have better well-being scores than their native-born counterparts. They are more likely to live in two-parent families (89% vs. 61%, respectively) and are more likely to live at or above 200% of poverty (79% vs. 62%). Children in immigrant families who identify with two or more races have slightly poorer well-being on two measures than those born in the United States: young adults ages 19 to 26 who are in school or working (82% vs. 84%, respectively) and children who live in low-poverty areas (77% vs. 79%).

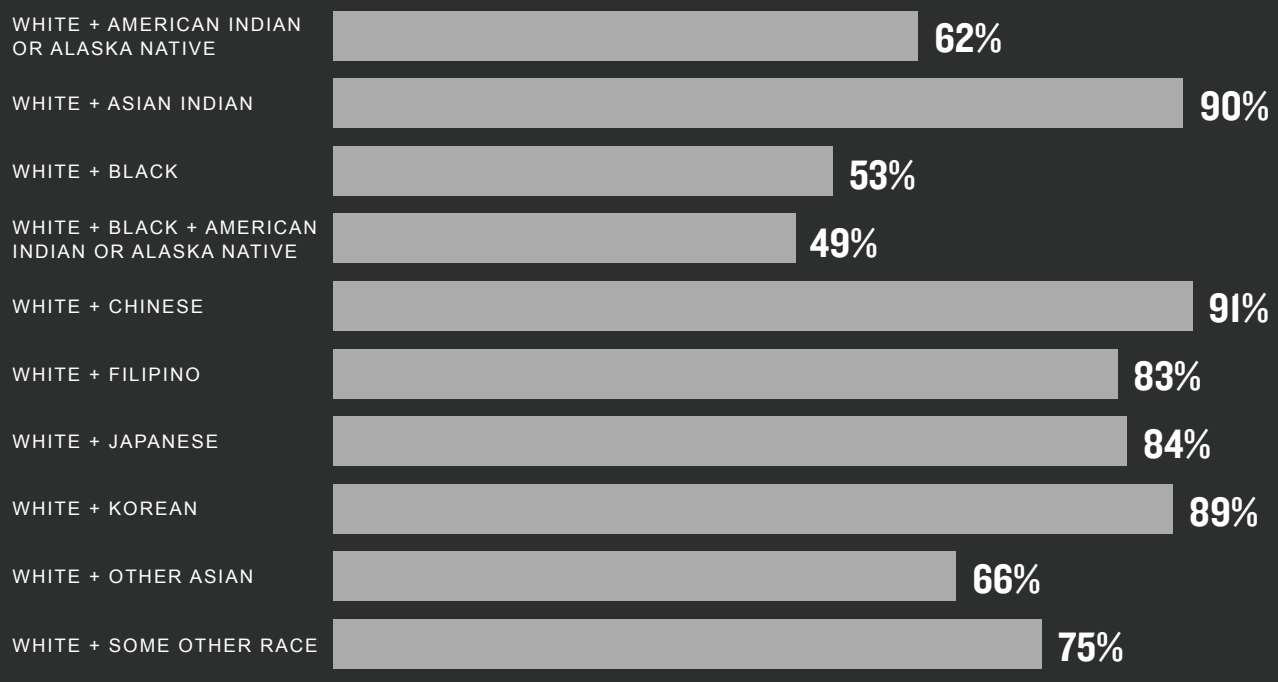
Outcomes for Children Who Identify With Two or More Races
by Immigrant Status

	Year	Children in U.S.-Born Families	Children in Immigrant Families
Young adults ages 19 to 26 who are in school or working	2017–21	84%	82%
Children who live in two-parent families	2017–21	61%	89%
Children living at or above 200% of poverty	2017–21	62%	79%

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

Note: *Includes only non-Hispanic children who identify with two or more races.*

Children Living at or Above 200% of Poverty
by 10 Largest Subgroups (2017–21)



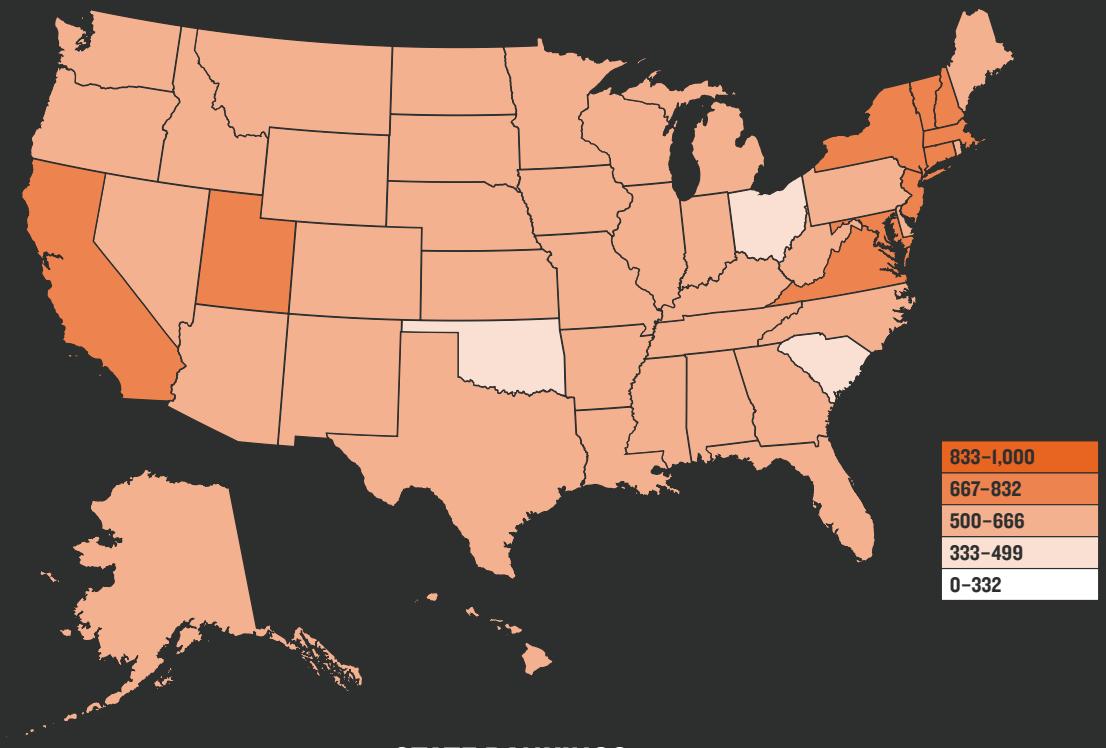
Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 2017–21 American Community Survey five-year PUMS.*

Note: *Data are for non-Hispanic children.*

RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX SCORES

A State-to-State Comparison of Well-Being for

Children of Two or More Races



STATE RANKINGS

1. Connecticut *743*
2. New Hampshire *730*
3. New Jersey *729*
4. Massachusetts *723*
4. Vermont *723*
6. Utah *704*
7. California *690*
8. Virginia *685*
9. Maryland *674*
10. New York *667*
11. Washington *660*
12. Colorado *649*
13. Maine *648*
14. Illinois *637*
15. Oregon *636*
16. Hawaii *632*
17. Texas *631*
18. Arizona *629*
19. Florida *628*
20. Idaho *609*
21. Minnesota *602*
21. Wisconsin *602*
23. Georgia *596*
24. Alaska *587*
25. Rhode Island *586*
26. Iowa *578*
27. Nebraska *576*
28. North Dakota *575*
29. Delaware *568*
30. Arkansas *562*
30. Kansas *562*
30. Wyoming *562*
33. Montana *559*
34. Nevada *555*
35. New Mexico *552*
35. North Carolina *552*
37. Alabama *551*
38. Missouri *548*
39. Pennsylvania *543*
40. Indiana *537*
41. Michigan *515*
42. West Virginia *513*
43. Louisiana *512*
44. Tennessee *509*
45. South Dakota *502*
46. Kentucky *501*
46. Mississippi *501*
48. Oklahoma *498*
48. South Carolina *498*
50. Ohio *495*

Recommendations for a

BRIGHTER FUTURE

ADVANCING UNIVERSAL POLICIES TO BOLSTER ALL CHILDREN

Long-standing barriers have affected generations of Americans of color, and it will take both innovative programs and large-scale policy shifts to change our nation's trajectory. Historically, discriminatory policies tied to the New Deal and to the Federal Housing Administration left families of color out of key wealth-building opportunities.[65] The recent decision to restrict consideration of race as a specific factor in college-admissions decisions threatens progress toward opportunity for all.[66] Learning from past shortcomings and being mindful of the present need to equip our next generation for success, leaders should design, implement and manage policies to ensure they support child well-being and create opportunity for all children while closing gaps across race and class.

Universal policy solutions must respond to the unique experiences and barriers faced by different racial and ethnic communities to close gaps in well-being and increase access to opportunity. Using the steps below to design their strategies to help those with the greatest barriers (see "Creating Targeted Strategies"), leaders can use large-scale policies to directly improve outcomes for health, family financial stability and postsecondary success included in the Race for Results index.

1

Expand federal and state child tax credits and earned income tax credits for low-income families.

Ensuring families can fully support their children while earning and saving for the future requires policies and strategies to help struggling families — particularly those, including Black and Latino workers, who are far more likely than white workers to earn poverty-level wages.[67] Multiple studies find that young children in low-income households that receive an income boost, including from policies like a state or federal earned income tax credit (EITC), tend to do better and go further in school, reducing the disadvantages associated with exposure to poverty.[68] The EITC may play a particularly important role in helping children of color improve their math achievement, complete high school and enroll in college, research shows.[69]

Congress should expand the federal child tax credit and the earned income tax credit. Temporary improvements to the credits under the American Rescue Plan increased eligibility among some low-income families and workers, but those improvements expired at the end of 2021. As a result, an estimated 19 million children[70] — or more than 1 in 4 children under age 17 — get less than the full credit or no credit at all because their families earn too little. Congress should ensure that those families receive the full child tax credit and that more workers who are low income, particularly young adults who do not qualify for the credit because they do not have children,[71] get help from the EITC.

More states should create and strengthen their own child tax credits and EITCs. States

and jurisdictions including Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan and Virginia recently improved their EITCs, and Utah became the 31st state to enact an EITC. State leaders also have adopted policies to increase cash support for low-income families through state versions of a child tax credit in Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New Mexico. Connecticut enacted a one-time credit.[72]

Immigrant workers without authorization often file taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).[73] If the children in a household have Social Security numbers but the parents file with an ITIN, the household cannot claim the federal EITC. All families paying into the tax system should receive tax credits, and state lawmakers have been taking steps to ensure those working families are eligible for their state-level EITCs. In 2020, California and Colorado became the first states to allow ITIN filers to claim their state's EITC. The District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington have since followed, and more states should do the same.[74]

2 Design programs that help families provide for their child's future while reducing racial disparities.

Policymakers should take longer-term, bold steps to reduce persistent gaps in income and wealth by race[75] by contributing public funds in dedicated accounts to help families save for their children's future. Young people can use these funds to pursue higher education, secure housing or start a business at the age of 18. Policymakers should carefully target these investment vehicles to reduce racial disparities in assets and savings while helping families dedicate money for their children's future.

Baby bond proposals,[76] for example, seek to remove barriers to opportunity by seeding a government-managed trust account for children in families with the lowest net worth to use when they become adults. California and Connecticut have enacted such programs in the past few years, and other states have introduced legislation.[77] A recent Urban Institute brief outlines key components to help baby bonds reduce racial inequities, including universal eligibility with additional funds targeted to households with lower incomes and savings; automatic enrollment of individual account holders; flexible use of the funds; and public funding structured to provide a substantial nest egg for a young person's future.[78]

Children's savings accounts, another mechanism for building assets for a young person's future, offer financial incentives for families to save for education in long-term savings accounts. Programs typically start at birth or in early childhood with restricted accounts held in a state-run 529 plan, with financial incentives such as seed deposits or matching funds from public or private sources to supplement family savings.[79] A limitation of such programs is that families with the lowest incomes struggle to meet basic needs and have limited funds to save. A 2013 study on children's savings accounts, however, found that children from low- and moderate-income families with school savings of $1 to $499 were three times more likely to enroll in college and four times as likely to graduate as a child with no savings account.[80] Success sequence savings accounts[81] and expanded individual development accounts[82] provide other investment models policymakers can explore to expand savings and opportunities for young people as they transition to adulthood.

3

Expand Medicaid coverage.

Research suggests that Medicaid expansion is linked to narrowed racial disparities[83] in health coverage while increasing overall health care and health improvements for all racial and ethnic groups.[84] Children are more likely to be insured and to have access to care when their parents have health coverage, and that coverage reduces the likelihood that medical debt will undermine family finances.[85] Congress's requirement that states provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) starting in 2024[86] is an important step[87] to remove administrative barriers to coverage that fall disproportionately on people of color.[88] States that have not expanded Medicaid by taking up the options available through the Affordable Care Act should do so. South Dakota voters recently authorized expansion through a ballot measure, and North Carolina lawmakers did so through bipartisan legislation. States now can address severe gaps in maternal health by extending Medicaid coverage for pregnant women to 12 months postpartum — an increase from the previous 60-day cap. That coverage is critical to ensure well-being for mothers and babies. Medicaid covers 45% of births nationally,[89] including more than two-thirds of births to parents who are Black or American Indian or Alaska Native. Mothers in those groups have higher rates of pregnancy-related illness and death[90] compared with those who are white. More than half of states are implementing extended postpartum coverage under this new option;[91] others should join them.

CREATING TARGETED STRATEGIES

These universal policies are important but insufficient for continued progress. As the *2024 Race for Results* data reveal, race continues to be a factor in well-being for children and families in our nation — an enduring truth that requires targeted strategies designed to respond to the various experiences and barriers different groups face. In accordance with the Foundation's *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide*,[92] Casey recommends policymakers, practitioners and program developers take additional steps to create targeted programs and policies that can close well-being gaps for young people of color. In crafting these strategies, system leaders should look not just to improve the policies and practices they directly control, but also to influence other decision-makers to target strategies that are likely to affect the children in their purview.

4 **Follow the data.** Many places in the United States lack data broken down by race, ethnicity and other key factors, such as income, age, language, where people were born and involvement with child welfare, justice and other human services systems. Without those disaggregated data, local leaders cannot understand what each community needs and how resources are being allocated. Data in all areas of focus should be analyzed by race, gender, age, language spoken, immigration status and other relevant demographic variables, as well as geography. System leaders and other officials should invest in reliable, accurate data collection and analysis tools, including technology and staff.

5 **Engage communities that face the steepest barriers to opportunities and success.** Children, families and communities most affected by inequities have an important role to play in making sense of the data. Policymakers and system administrators should engage these audiences early and consistently,[93] with a goal of understanding their experiences and the systemic challenges they have encountered trying to connect to opportunity and supportive resources as well as the solutions needed to address these challenges. Policymakers and funders also should work to ensure that both system leaders and community members can attain the skills they need to analyze data with confidence.

6 **Analyze root causes of inequities.** Once affected community members and system leaders have access to detailed data and knowledge to help them interpret the data, they can work together to identify the major factors that keep different groups from opportunity — and pinpoint the policy and practice solutions most likely to remove those barriers. In considering these fundamental causes and their solutions, communities and government leaders should learn from and improve on prior efforts to eliminate the inequities.

7 **Use racial equity impact assessment tools and implementation measures to ensure policies achieve targeted goals.** Targeted strategies should be paired with specific plans and processes for tracking performance, accountability and evaluation. Racial equity impact assessments are valuable tools for examining how a proposed policy, decision or budget might affect different racial

and ethnic communities.[94] These tools help to anticipate and minimize the likelihood of racial bias and disparate impact, even if unintentional. For example, the Biden administration's Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government[95] and the subsequent Executive Order on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government[96] require every federal agency to conduct public engagement, policy design and program delivery in a way that ensures government resources reach Americans of color and all communities experiencing persistent poverty and inequality. This federal initiative demonstrates how important it is for leaders to implement federal policies and programs that are focused on removing barriers for certain communities in a way that achieves that goal. Local and state government institutions should adopt similar efforts.

CONCLUSION

All our children need and deserve our best. **They are depending on us, and we as a country are depending on them to be tomorrow's leaders.** Equipping all our young people to grow up well requires gathering the data to understand the needs and different conditions each group of young people confronts and taking action tailored to address those needs and conditions. When every city, county and state, along with the federal government, works hand in hand toward targeted strategies with businesses, philanthropies, faith institutions, nonprofit organizations and communities, our nation will have the tools to set a brighter future in motion.

DEFINITIONS *and* DATA SOURCES

RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX SCORE is the value between 0 and 1,000, based on 12 critical milestones for success. To construct this index, we standardized scores across 12 indicators that have different scales and distributions to help make more accurate comparisons. Standard scores (or z-scores) are based on 50-state averages and standard deviations for each indicator. To better show the differences across groups and states, we converted these z-scores to a scale ranging from 0 to 1,000, using this formula: [(Score – Minimum Score) / (Maximum Score – Minimum Score)] x 1,000. The lowest standard score across states and racial and ethnic groups was assigned a 0, and the highest score was assigned 1,000. This formula was applied to the z-scores for each of the 12 indicators, and then those values were averaged to produce an overall index value for each state and racial and ethnic group. Lower values represent worse well-being for children, while higher values represent more positive well-being. Indicator estimates were suppressed when the coefficient of variation was greater than 30% or when the estimates did not meet source-specific reporting standards. The average was based only on the indicators that had valid values, and index values were reported only for those groups that had no more than three of the 12 values suppressed. For more information on the development of the Race for Results Index, visit www.aecf.org/raceforresults.

BABIES BORN AT NORMAL BIRTH WEIGHT is the percentage of live births weighing 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds) or more. The data reflect the mother's place of residence, not the place where the birth occurred.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics.

CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 5 ENROLLED IN NURSERY SCHOOL, PRESCHOOL OR KINDERGARTEN is the percentage of children ages 3 to 5 enrolled in nursery school, preschool or kindergarten during the previous three months.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

FOURTH GRADERS WHO SCORED AT OR ABOVE PROFICIENT IN READING is the percentage of fourth grade public school students who scored at or above the proficient level in reading, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Public schools include charter schools and exclude Bureau of Indian Education schools and Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

EIGHTH GRADERS WHO SCORED AT OR ABOVE PROFICIENT IN MATH is the percentage of eighth grade public school students who scored at or above the proficient level in mathematics, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Public schools include charter schools and exclude Bureau of Indian Education schools and Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

FEMALES AGES 15 TO 19 WHO DELAY CHILDBEARING UNTIL ADULTHOOD is the percentage of females ages 15 to 19 who did not give birth during their teen years. The number of teen mothers was calculated by adding all first births to 15- to 19-year-olds in the current year to all first births to 14- to 18-year-olds in the previous year, all first births to 13- to 17-year-olds in the year before, and so on, ending with first births to 13- and 14-year-olds five years prior to the current year. The percentage of females who delayed childbearing was calculated by subtracting the estimated number of teen mothers from the population of 15- to 19-year-old girls in each state, and then dividing the result by that population.

SOURCES: Birth Statistics: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics. Population Statistics: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GRADUATING ON TIME is the percentage of an entering freshman class graduating in four years. Also called the adjusted cohort graduation rate, the measure is derived by dividing the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. Students entering grade 9 for the first time form a cohort that is "adjusted" by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort and subtracting any students who subsequently transfer out.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

YOUNG ADULTS AGES 19 TO 26 WHO ARE IN SCHOOL OR WORKING is the percentage of young adults ages 19 to 26 who are either enrolled in school (full or part time) or employed (full or part time). This measure is sometimes referred to as "youth connectedness."

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

YOUNG ADULTS AGES 25 TO 29 WHO HAVE COMPLETED AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE OR HIGHER is the percentage of young adults ages 25 to 29 who have attained at least an associate degree.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

CHILDREN BIRTH TO 17 WHO LIVE WITH A HOUSEHOLDER WHO HAS AT LEAST A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA is the percentage of children under age 18 living in households where the household head has attained at least a high school diploma, GED or equivalent credential.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

CHILDREN BIRTH TO 17 WHO LIVE IN TWO-PARENT FAMILIES is the percentage of children under age 18 who live with two parents — biological, adoptive or stepparents. Two-parent families include married-couple families, as well as those in which the parents are unmarried partners.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

CHILDREN BIRTH TO 17 LIVING AT OR ABOVE 200% OF POVERTY is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes at or above 200% of the U.S. poverty threshold, as issued each year by the U.S. Census Bureau. In calendar year 2021, a 200% poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was $54,958. Poverty status is not determined for people in military barracks, for those in institutional quarters or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children). The data are based on income received in the 12 months prior to the survey.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

CHILDREN BIRTH TO 17 WHO LIVE IN LOW-POVERTY AREAS (POVERTY <20%) is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in census tracts where the poverty rates of the total population are less than 20%. The census tract-level data used in this analysis are only available in the five-year American Community Survey.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

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About
THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

Established 75 years ago, the Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children and youth 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. Based in Baltimore, the Foundation is dedicated to investing in the well-being and success of children and youth who face major hurdles on the road to adulthood.

Nationally, the Foundation produces publications on key areas of well-being, including the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, *Race for Results* and periodic reports on critical child and family policy and practice issues. In addition, through its Thrive by 25® briefs, it reports on the needs of young people ages 14 through 24. All the Foundation's resources are available at **www.aecf.org/publications**.

The Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Center — at **datacenter.aecf.org** — provides the best available data on child well-being in the United States. The Foundation also funds the KIDS COUNT Network — which counts members serving every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands — to provide a more detailed, local picture of how children are faring.

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