



Hawai'i KIDS COUNT E-Bulletin

Center on the Family | University of Hawai'i at Mānoa-CTAHR

Welcome to Hawai'i KIDS COUNT's first quarterly issue. Hawai'i KIDS COUNT aims to provide unbiased and high-quality data and research to policymakers, child and family advocates, and other stakeholders in an effort to inform their work and advance sound policies and initiatives that support Hawaii's children and families. In this Legislative Issue, we aim to provide you data and information related to important and current economic security and early childhood care and education policy measures.

Economic Security

Hawai'i has seen improvements in several indicators of economic well-being over the post-recession years, including the percentage of children in poverty, children whose parents lack secure employment, and children in households with a high housing cost burden. However, our state is ranked 30th of 50 in overall economic well-being for children and continues to have one of the worst housing cost burden rates in the nation.[\[1\]](#) Four in 10 children in Hawaii live in households with a high housing cost burden (defined as a household spending 30% or more of income on housing) compared to three in 10 nationwide.[\[2\]](#) Housing affordability is the major driver of economic hardship and homelessness.[\[3\]](#) When families spend over 30% of their income on housing, the risk of housing insecurity rises and families have less available to spend on

other important items such as healthcare and food.

Research documents the link between growing up in economic hardship and negative outcomes such as poor academic achievement, poor health outcomes, and lower wages and underemployment in adulthood.^[4] Children of families who face economic insecurity are also more likely to experience “toxic stress” wherein the stress can alter children’s physical growth and brain development, impeding their ability to thrive in school and develop the social and emotional skills to function well in adulthood.^[5]

Policies and initiatives that promote family economic security help form a critical foundation for the well-being of children. They can ensure that low-income families can pay for their housing expenses, put food on the table and afford other basics, and also help children thrive in the long run.

Relevant policy measures introduced during the 2019 Hawaii Legislative session, include:

- expanding the existing Hawai‘i Dependent Care Tax Credit to raise the tax credit amount and increase income limits used to determine families’ benefit amount;
- raising the minimum wage;
- allowing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to get double credit when using their benefits to purchase Hawai‘i-grown fresh produce; and
- creating a rental assistance program to assist families with minor children experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness due to domestic violence.

Did you know?

- Hawai‘i has the highest mortgage debt per capita in the U.S., where mortgage debt represented 77.3% of the total debt in 2015.^[6]
- Among Hawai‘i renters, three-fourths of households spend over half of their income on housing.^[7]
- The average retail prices of electricity in Hawai‘i are the highest in the nation, at more than two times the U.S. average (26.05 cents per kilowatt-hour in

Hawai'i vs. 10.48 cents per kilowatt-hour for the U.S. average in 2017).[8]

- In fiscal year 2017, over one-third (37%) of clients who received homeless services were members of households with children.[9]

Early Childhood Care and Education

The early years of children's lives lay the foundation for lifelong success and establishing the conditions that promote educational achievement for children is critical.[10] From birth to age 5, children's brain development is most responsive to positive environments[11] and high quality early childhood programs can improve cognitive, social-emotional, and health outcomes for all children.[12] Preschool and other childhood programs can have both positive short- and long-term effects for children. In the short-term, there are strong effects of early childhood programs on young children's school-related skills and in the long-term, improved high school graduation rates and college enrollment, higher adulthood earnings, reduced substance use and criminal activity, and better adulthood health. High quality early childhood programs are particularly beneficial to children living in poverty, who tend to fall behind in school readiness and academic achievement when compared to their peers. These programs can offset the negative impacts of poverty and other risk factors on early school success.[13]

Access to early care and education programs also promotes parental labor force attachment. Fewer interruptions to employment increase a parent's lifetime earnings and retirement savings and provide greater workforce stability and productivity for employers. Additionally, better outcomes for children and families translate into cost savings for society, where approximately each dollar spent on early childhood programs yields a return to society of \$3.00 to \$8.60 based on increased earnings and reduced needs for social services.[14] Children, adults, and society as a whole benefit from providing children with a strong and healthy beginning.

Current policy measures and initiatives introduced during the 2019 Legislative session focus on:

- funding new public pre-kindergarten classrooms, additional staff, and associated operational costs;
- supporting charter school pre-kindergarten classrooms across the state; and
- adjusting the sliding scale for family copays and child care provider reimbursement rates under the Preschool Open Doors and Child Care Connections child care subsidy programs.

This piece was adapted from the [Hawai'i Early Learning Needs Assessment report](#).

Did you know?

- Approximately one-half (53%) of young children, ages 3 and 4, are not in school.[\[15\]](#)
- In Hawai'i, 39% of children under age 6 are read to by family members less than four days per week.[\[16\]](#)
- The average yearly cost of full-time center-based infant care in Hawai'i is \$13,000.[\[17\]](#)
- Hawai'i has almost 109,000 children under the age of 6, and 64% of these children need care because their parents work. However, the state has enough Department-of-Human-Services-regulated childcare seats to serve only about 24% of our young keiki.[\[18\]](#)

Stay Informed and Get Involved

How can I stay informed?

- To learn more about economic security and raising the minimum wage policies, please visit our partners at [Hawai'i Appleseed](#). [Subscribe](#) to their mailing list and receive information on general updates and advocacy opportunities.
- If you would like more information about efforts to raise minimum wage in Hawai'i, visit the [Raise Up Hawai'i campaign website](#).
- Visit our partners at [Hawaii Children's Action Network](#) and learn more about the aforementioned and related policy measures by downloading the [2019 Hawaii Children's Policy Agenda](#). You can sign up for their newsletter, alerts,

and information about upcoming events.

How can I get involved with the legislative process?

Get involved with the legislative process by registering on <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>. When you register, you can create your own personalized list of measures and receive e-mail notifications for hearings or specific committees. Registering also allows you to submit testimonies online. If you prefer not to provide testimonies online, you can provide them in-person by attending hearings.

Where do I go to submit testimony online?

You can submit testimony online via this link:

<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/submittestimony.aspx>

Where can I get more information?

- You can find “A Citizen’s Guide to Participation in the Legislative Process here: <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/citizensguide.aspx>
 - To read general information and FAQs, visit <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/faq.aspx>
 - The Hawai‘i Public Access Room has created a guide to the Hawai‘i State Legislature’s website, which you can find here: <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/docs/HiLegSiteGuide.pdf>. In general, the Hawai‘i Public Access Room aims to enhance citizens’ ability to participate in the legislative process by providing workshops, services, resources, and general information. Learn more at <http://lrbhawaii.org/par/>.
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HAWAII: Ranks 24th in Child Well-Being

#KIDSCOUNT

 **THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION**

About Us

KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Center on the Family, a unit within the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, is Hawai'i's designated KIDS COUNT grantee.

Happenings at the Center on the Family

This spring semester, the University of Hawai'i Center on the Family is offering a seminar series focused on fostering the health and well-being of families. Please bring your lunch and join us on the last Friday of each month from 12:00 – 1:00 P.M. at:



The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Miller Hall, Room 2

2515 Campus Road

Honolulu, HI 96822

Topics and speakers for the seminar series include:

“You Can’t Get There from Here: Mobility Networks and The Administration of the Housing Choice Voucher Program” by Philip

Garboden, Ph.D.

March 29, 2019

“Mindfulness and Service Learning: Teaching, Research, and Service” by

Thao Le, Ph.D.

April 26, 2019

Please bring your lunch and join the discussion. If you have any questions about the brown bag presentations, please contact Dr. Jenjira Yahirun at [jyahirun@hawaii.edu](mailto: jyahirun@hawaii.edu).

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[2] Ibid.

[3] National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2018). Retrieved from <https://endhomelessness.org/five-takeaways-huds-2018-homeless-count/>

[4] Sherman, A., & Mitchell, T. (2017). Economic Security Programs Help Low-Income children Succeed Over Long Term, Many Studies Find. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/economic-security-programs-help-low-income-children-succeed-over>

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[6] 2015 data. Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism. (2017). An Analysis of Consumer Debt: How does Hawai'i Compare with the Nation? State of Hawai'i: Research and Economic Analysis Division. Retrieved from http://files.Hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/consumer_debt_final.pdf

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[8] U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2018). Average Retail Price of Electricity, Annual. Retrieved from <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/browser/#/topic/7?agg=1,0&geo=vvvvvvvvvvo&endsec=g&linechart=ELEC.PRICE.US-ALL.A&columnchart=ELEC.PRICE.US-ALL.A&map=ELEC.PRICE.US-ALL.A&freq=A&ctype=linechart<ype=pin&rtype=s&maptype=0&rse=0&pin=>

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[10] The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2018). 2018 KIDS COUNT Data Book. Retrieved from https://www.aecf.org/resources/2018-kids-count-data-book/?utm_source=databook&utm_medium=pdf&utm_campaign=2018%20databook&utm_content=databook&utm_term=aecf.org/

[11] National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007). The Timing and Quality of Early Experiences Combine to Shape Brain Architecture: Working Paper No. 5. Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2007/05/Timing_Quality_Early_Experiences-1.pdf.

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ARCHIVE OF E-BULLETINS: PDF versions of our monthly e-bulletins are available at <http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu/projects/kidscount/ebulletin.aspx>

Hawai'i KIDS COUNT is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We thank them for their support, and we acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in the E-Bulletin are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation.

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