

# PROVIDENCE Journal

## R.I. jumps 10 spots in national ranking of child well-being



Rhode Island Kids Count Executive Director Elizabeth Burke Bryant says she is pleased about the state's progress in improving the quality of life for children, but she said more work must be done to close disparities for low-income children and children of color. [The Providence Journal, file / Sandor Bodo]

By **Linda Borg**  
Journal Staff Writer

Posted Jun 28, 2018 at 5:33 PM

## Rhode Island climbed from 29th to 19th nationally in Kids Count's overall ranking of child well-being, which measures factors such as health, education, economics, and family/community, but the state still lags its New England neighbors.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Rhode Island ranks 19th in the country for overall child well-being, moving up from 29th in last year's Kids Count report.

Rhode Island, however, is last among the New England states in a fact book released this week by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The report, also released by Rhode Island Kids Count, looks at four broad measures: childhood health, education, economic well-being, and family and community. The study examines trends over five years and annually.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, the executive director of Rhode Island Kids Count, attributed the improvement to several factors, including a decrease in childhood poverty. More parents have secure jobs today compared with 2010, and fewer families are saddled with high housing costs.

Rhode Island ranked number one in terms of the number of teenagers who are either in school or working.

The teenage birth rate — at 13 births per 1,000 — also fell between 2010 and 2016. Rhode Island ranks sixth in the country on this measure.

But Rhode Island only ranks 28th nationally in education. The state performs well in fourth-grade reading — 14th in the nation — but it lags behind other states in eighth-grade math — 33rd in the nation.

“We are pleased to see Rhode Island's progress in moving up in the overall child well-being ranking ...” Burke Bryant said. “We need to accelerate that progress with a key focus on closing persistent disparities for low-income children and children of color.”

This year's Kids Count Data Book stresses the importance of participation in the 2020 Census. Burke Bryant said young children under 5 have been historically under-counted, including about 18,000 children in Rhode Island.

— [lborg@providencejournal.com](mailto:lborg@providencejournal.com)

(401) 277-7823

On Twitter: [@lborgprojocom](https://twitter.com/lborgprojocom)