

Child abuse and neglect numbers are up in Michigan, report finds

Child abuse and neglect cases have increased by nearly one-third, according to the 2019 Kids Count Report released Tuesday.

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LANSING, Mich. - The children of Michigan face some big challenges, from poverty to academic struggles to child abuse. The numbers are in and the Kids Count in Michigan Data Book has been released.

The report, released by the [Michigan League for Public Policy](#), takes a very detailed look at the well-being of children in 82 of the state's 83 counties—Keweenaw County lacks sufficient data. The 2019 book primarily compares data from 2012 to 2017 and focuses on 16 key indicators in four domains: economic security, health and safety, family and community, and education.

The latest numbers indicate that despite some improvements, there are some alarming increases in things like confirmed child abuse and neglect cases, foster care placement, and child poverty.

According to the report, confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect in the state have gone up 29.5 percent since 2012. The data also revealed that nearly half a million—roughly 1-in-5 children—are still living at or below the poverty level.

"The Kids Count data book has been working to draw attention to pervasive child poverty for years, as 1 in 5 kids is still unacceptable, and it's even higher for kids of color," said Alicia Guevara Warren, Kids Count in Michigan project director. "A family's lack of economic security affects a child's well-being in many ways, from their living conditions and nutrition to their mental and emotional stress, and can lead to unsafe homes."

"The increase in child abuse and neglect, which is impacting our youngest children the most, underscores the urgency of the issues facing our kids," Warren went on to say.

The top five counties for child well-being in 2019 are

1. Livingston
2. Clinton
3. Ottawa
4. Oakland
5. Washtenaw

The bottom five counties in 2019 are

- 78. Muskegon
- 79. Schoolcraft
- 80. Alcona
- 81. Luce
- 82. Lake

“Kids aren’t political and their well-being shouldn’t be, either. Greater investments are needed if we are going to make Michigan a better place to live, raise a family and simply be a kid,” said Michele Corey, Chair of the Kids Count in Michigan Advisory Committee and Vice President for Programs for Michigan’s Children.

“But the Kids Count data is only as powerful as the action it generates, and we hope legislators will have this book in their hands and on their minds as they begin making important funding decisions in the coming months.”

BREAKING IT DOWN

Kent County

Ranked 19 statewide in child well-being by the 2019 Kids Count book.

- Number of confirmed victims in child abuse/neglect cases increased by 26.5% since 2012
- Children in families being investigated for child abuse/neglect increased by 24.8% since 2012
- Children in poverty, ages 0-17 decreased by 38.7% since 2012
- Children in foster care increased by 9.4% since 2012
- Births to teens, ages 15-19 decreased by 25.6% since 2012
- Children not proficient (by M-STEP standards) in reading by 3rd grade increased by 5.4% since 2012
- Students not graduating on time decreased by 14.3% since 2012

Ottawa County

Ranked 4 statewide in child well-being by the 2019 Kids Count book.

- Number of confirmed victims in child abuse/neglect cases increased by 50.7% since 2012
- Children in families being investigated for child abuse/neglect increased by 22.9% since 2012
- Children in poverty, ages 0-17 decreased by 35.4% since 2012
- Children in foster care increased by 10% since 2012
- Births to teens, ages 15-19 decreased by 43.4% since 2012
- Children not proficient (by M-STEP standards) in reading by 3rd grade increased by 11.3% since 2012
- Students not graduating on time decreased by 26.6% since 2012

Muskegon County

Ranked 79 statewide in child well-being by the 2019 Kids Count book.

- Number of confirmed victims in child abuse/neglect cases increased by 9.1% since 2012
- Children in families being investigated for child abuse/neglect increased by 43.8% since 2012
- Children in poverty, ages 0-17 decreased by 35.4% since 2012
- Children in foster care decreased by 4.9% since 2012
- Births to teens, ages 15-19 decreased by 26.3% since 2012
- Children not proficient (by M-STEP standards) in reading by 3rd grade increased by 9.1% since 2012
- Students not graduating on time decreased by 9.4% since 2012

You can read the full report [here](#).