Child Well-Being

OHIO'S
U.S. RANKING
25/50

A child's well-being is the holistic experience and functioning of the child across the physical, mental and/or emotional, nutrition, and safety domains.[1] Child well-being is supported or hindered by environmental and social factors. A child's chances of thriving depend not only on individual, family and community characteristics but also on the state in which they are raised. The Annie E Casey Foundation assesses child well-being each year in their publication Kids Count since 1990. Kids Count is an annual ranking of states on 16 key measures of child well-being. The Kids Count Data Center stores key measures, which include hundreds of indicators that also look at the impact of poverty and race on child outcomes. Those indicators are grouped into four areas: economic, education, health and family and community. Several indicators for child well-being are also associated with risk and protective factors for intimate partner violence. By improving indicators for child well-being we can also impact intimate partner violence perpetration.

Statistics

A child's well-being is linked to their parents well-being. Many indicators in Kids Count are conditions the child's parents face like employment, education, health and the communities in which their families live. In 2018, Ohio ranked right in the middle of the US for Kids Count child well-being—25th out of 50 states.[2] Child well-being by the four areas Ohio rankings are between 16 and 31. Ohio ranks highest in education well-being for children with a ranking of 16. Ohio is again in the middle of the US states for economic well-being at 22 and health at 23. Ohio's lowest ranking is for family and community conditions with a ranking of 31 out of the 50 US states. The indicators for family and community conditions include children in single parent families (37%), children in families where the head of household lacks a high school diploma (9%), children living in high poverty areas (12%) and rate of children born to mothers ages 15-19 (19.0 per 1,000 females).[3]

Disparities

Disparities in child well-being are driven by policy choices and economic investment that are steeped in systemic racism. When looking at child well-being for children of color the differences in the data are stark. The Children's Defense Fund points out the growing diversity in Ohio's population as 30% of children 0-4 are children of color and of those half of those children are Black children.

Family/Community Conditions by Race	Children in Single Parent Families*	Children in Families: Head of Household Lacks High School Diploma	Children Living in High Poverty Areas**	Rate of Children Born to Mothers Ages 15-17 (per 1,000 Females)
Hispanic/Latino	54%	20%	22%	31%
Black	72%	14%	39%	34%
White/Non-Hispanic	28%	8%	5%	15%
All Ohio Children	37%	9%	12%	7.5%

*Note: *Data is from 2017 most recent year reported; **Data is reported in Kids Count for 2015-2019 average.*

Barriers

- State policy choices as well as investments in families and communities strongly influence children's chances for success.
- Disparities in child well-being are driven by policy choices and economic investment that are steeped in systemic racism.
- ODVNs Environmental Scan found that higher paying manufacturing jobs in Ohio are being replaced by jobs in lower paying and non-steady industries like hospitality and service industry jobs. These jobs provide workers with fewer benefits, lower pay and less flexibility for parents.
- Ohio like many other states is in an affordable housing crisis. Housing is the largest cost for families, which makes reducing the housing cost burden critical for ensuring child well-being. In addition, families who are able to access Section 8 vouchers are often unable to find housing because landlords discriminate against single parents and People of Color.
- Affordable child care is also a critical need to ensure child well-being since it is directly related to parents being able to work and the overall health and well-being of the children in child care facilities.

Ohio's Ranking of Infant Mortality

Ohio Rank (lower is better)
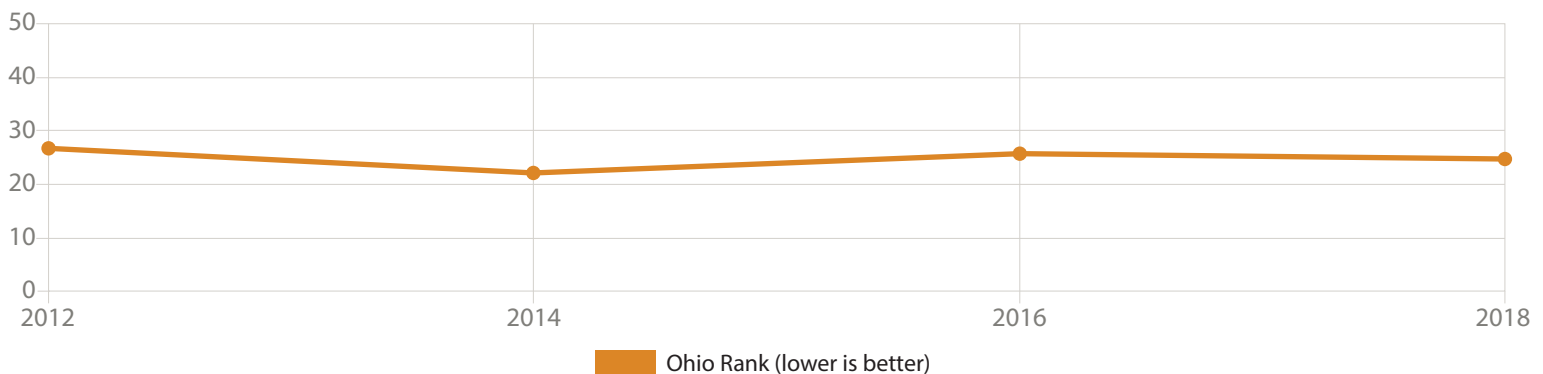
Remedies

- Improve child well-being by improving the conditions in which children live and grow. Many child well-being indicators are buttressed by economic opportunities, disparities and access to those opportunities. Eliminate barriers to economic opportunities for parents.
- Ohio's Children's Defense Fund is a strong advocate for family and child well-being. OCDF uses data they report to Kids Count and promotes policies and programs that promote resilience for all Ohio children.
- Raise Ohio's minimum wage to $15.00 per hour by 2026. This alone will benefit 1.56 million Ohioan's who currently work in low wages jobs which increase their likelihood of living in poverty and many of whom are parents.[4]
- Maintain the federal child tax credit that was increased in The American Rescue Plan. The tax credit was increased from $2,000 to $3,600 for children under age 6, and $3,000 for other children under age 18. In Ohio, this will potentially decrease child poverty by 50 percent.[5,6]
- Change the narrative around conditions that promote child well-being from placing the burden of economic instability and poverty on individuals to acknowledging the legacy of programs and policies that have been steeped in systemic racism.
- Use data and evidence to promote policies and remove barriers that will give every child and their family access to necessary conditions to build resilience and to live to their fullest potential.
- Create system's change through cross system collaboration. Multiple systems and organizations must work together to move Ohio toward equitable policies and practices that support holistic child well-being. The Linking Systems of Care for Ohio's Youth project is an example of this type of multi-systems collaboration.