



South Dakota KIDS COUNT

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Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters



Two out of every three fourth graders overall are not proficient in reading according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). South Dakota parallels the nation with 67% of fourth graders who scored below grade-level reading proficiency, ranking the state 25th. The problem is even worse for children from low-income families. Nationally, four of five fourth graders from low-income families are not proficient in reading, and, in South Dakota, the number is slightly less than four of five (80%). The failure to help

children from low-income families reach this milestone cements educational failure and poverty into the next generation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation is focusing attention on the critical importance of achieving grade-level reading proficiency for all children by the end of third grade. The ability to read is central to a child's success in school, life-long earning potential, and the ability to contribute to the nation's economy and its security. This new national emphasis on reading success is introduced by a special KIDS COUNT report, *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters* and is supported by a broad coalition including, America's Promise Alliance, Mission: Readiness and United Way Worldwide.

"Because it's such a strong predictor of future problems, Casey is putting a stake in the ground on ensuring that children are able to read at grade level by the end of third grade," said Michael L. Eskew, Casey Board Chair and former CEO of UPS. "The research is clear and compelling. And it affirms what common sense tells us. In a knowledge dependent world and global economy, no city, no region, no nation -- including our own -- can compete successfully without attending to the basics. And that starts with reading."



The Casey Foundation will release the report during a webcast on May 18th at 1:00 PM ET. The live webcast will include featured speakers and a panel discussion, moderated by Michel Martin, Host of NPR's "Tell Me More," with representatives from the education, government, and business sectors. To register for the webcast, please visit www.visualwebcaster.com/casey-foundation-briefing. Follow the Annie E. Casey Foundation and this issue on Twitter @annieECaseyfdn and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AnnieECaseyFoundation.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization, whose primary mission is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. State and local organizations rely on South Dakota KIDS COUNT for comprehensive data profiles such as the annual Factbook, a Facts on KIDS quarterly monograph, and special reports. For more information, visit www.sdkidscount.org

State-level indicators were selected because they reflect the wide range of factors that influence and are impacted by children's early reading proficiency. Although the key indicator for the report is the rate of 4th grade students scoring below proficiency on the NAEP reading test, other indicators are included to further illuminate the challenges states face in ensuring educational success for all students.

[View South Dakota data.](#)

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