

# Poverty Rising in Idaho According to Kids Count Report

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## Poverty Rising in ID According to Kids Count Report

BOISE, Idaho - The number of children living in poverty in Idaho was on the rise even before the recession, and is likely still going up, according to the new Kids Count Data Book released today. The annual state-by-state report tracks trends and statistics that make a difference in a child's life, from teen pregnancy rates to childhood poverty.

Extension Family Development Specialist Harriet Shaklee at the University of Idaho says studies that tracked families for decades beyond the Great Depression help explain why poverty causes problems for kids as they become adults, and it's linked to what's going on with the parents when there's economic stress.

"Parenting skills declined because of that; caused them to become depressed and caused them to become erratic in their discipline."

Idaho's childhood poverty rate is at 16 percent, up from 14 percent in 2000. Shaklee says children in poverty are less likely to graduate from high school, more likely to have a hard time holding down jobs, and have a higher rate of alcohol or drug abuse.

She says studies also show that some kids grow up gracefully in poverty, and the key is keeping parents in good mental health. She lists free community events, extended family stepping in to help, and caring neighbors as possible social supports that are in the best interests of kids in poverty.

"Programs like 'parents as teachers' that support families and help parents be better parents. That's an excellent program to have because we see that parents are the

key to children's outcomes when poverty strikes."

Overall, Idaho is ranked as 21st-best for kids among the states.

The Kids Count Data Book 2010 is at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Harriet Shaklee's research on poverty is at [www.idahokidscount.org](http://www.idahokidscount.org).

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