

<http://raisingofamerica.org/child-olympics>

The Child Olympics

It is often said a nation can be measured by how well it attends to its children—their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued and included in their families and communities. The U.S. may still win the most gold medals in the Olympics every four years, but we are losing the child Olympics every day.

By almost any measure, children born in the U.S. fare worse on average than those born in other rich countries, and many middle income countries as well. The interactive above discloses our shameful rankings in infant mortality, child poverty, preschool attendance and high school graduation rates. The results would be similar if we chose children's mental health disorders, obesity, substance abuse, violence, teenage pregnancy, literacy and math proficiency and, woefully, deaths by child abuse and maltreatment.



Add it all up and the U.S. ranks 26th of 29 countries in the [United Nation's 2013 index of overall child well-being](#), presented at the beginning of The Raising of America documentary series. Children in Greece, Slovakia and Poland fare better.

“The tragedy,” as an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report put it with respect to physical health, “is not that the U.S. is losing a contest with other countries, but that Americans are dying and suffering from illness and injury at rates that are demonstrably unnecessary.”

How can this be? How can a nation as wealthy and as strong as the U.S. put so many more of its children at risk than do other wealthy nations, even as we cheer our young people’s athletic triumphs in the Olympics?

Sources: [Education at a Glance 2014, OECD](#) & [Child Wellbeing in Advanced Economies in the Late 2000s \(2013\), UNICEF](#)

TAKE-AWAY

Why does the wealthiest nation in the world have some of the worst child outcomes of any advanced economy?

DIG
DEEPER

We're Number One!

Just a few decades ago, the U.S. was among the world's leaders when it came to indicators of how well our children were doing. Today, we're Number One in a whole lot of other ways.

Highest GDP - \$16,768,100,000,000 ([source](#))

Most billionaires - 536 ([source](#))

Most money spent on defense -
\$609,913,680,000 ([source](#))

Highest rate of incarceration - 7 per 1,000
([source](#))

Most children killed by guns - 3.24 per 100,000 ([source](#))

Highest percentage of teenage mothers - 34.2 per 1,000 women ([source](#))

Highest infant mortality rate - 6.1 per 1,000 births ([source](#))

Fewest paid paternal or family leave days guaranteed by federal law - 0
([source](#))

Fewest paid sick days guaranteed by federal law - 0 ([source](#))

Fewest paid vacation days guaranteed by federal law - 0 ([source](#))

It's no great surprise that our children aren't doing as well as they used to:
[34th in child well-being](#)

