

METHODOLOGY

America's Best Children's Hospitals 2026

Scope, Data Collection, Evaluation, and Results

statista 

Newsweek



Methodology – America’s Best Children’s Hospitals 2026

Summary of the project

- To provide parents of sick children with a comprehensive resource for informed decision-making, Statista and Newsweek have partnered for the fourth time to award the leading children’s hospitals in the U.S.
- The **America’s Best Children’s Hospitals 2026** ranking recognizes the leading hospitals in eight pediatric subspecialties.
- The ranking features the top 50 hospitals for **Cardiology & Cardiac Surgery, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology & Gastrointestinal Surgery, Neonatology, Neurology & Neurosurgery, Oncology, Orthopedics** and **Pulmonology**.
- The underlying data analysis is based on **four data sources**:
 - **Nationwide online survey**: During the survey period from February to March 2026, over ten thousand medical experts were invited to an online survey in cooperation with Newsweek. Participants with knowledge about pediatric care (e.g., general and specialized pediatricians and nurses) were asked to recommend leading children’s hospitals in the U.S.
 - **Hospital quality metrics**: Hospital quality metrics with a focus on indicators relevant to the respective subspecialties and accreditations/certifications were considered.
 - **Patient satisfaction** data based on Google reviews was included.
 - **Statista PROMs Implementation Survey**
- Hospitals specializing in multiple specialties received specific recommendation scores for each respective medical field. Therefore, a hospital can be represented in more than one list if it receives enough recommendations in each specialty.
- Hospitals with a very small number of beds were not considered in the ranking.

New features and changes in the 2026 edition

- The following list provides a brief overview of all **major changes in this year's edition** compared to the 2025 rankings:
 - **Inclusion of additional hospital quality metrics data sources:** Leapfrog Hospital Safety and Quality Data have been included.
 - This year, AHA and Arcadia data were not used in the calculation of this year's hospital quality metrics score.
 - **Updated *Statista* PROMs Implementation Survey:** For the most recent data collection cycle, the survey, eligibility thresholds, and ribbon allocation for participating hospitals were updated.
 - **Increased PROMs implementation weighting:** This year, the weighting of the PROMs implementation pillar was increased within the scoring model to reflect the growing emphasis on standardized and patient-centered care.

Hospital evaluation is based on four pillars, ranging from peer evaluations and quality metrics to patient satisfaction and PROMs implementation

Data sources



Medical experts with knowledge about children's care were invited to the survey

1 Hospital recommendations from peers

From February to March 2026, Statista invited over ten thousand medical professionals (mostly doctors, but also hospital managers and other healthcare professionals) with knowledge about children's hospitals to an online survey. The survey was also promoted on [newsweek.com](https://www.newsweek.com).



Nationwide online survey among medical professionals with knowledge about the different pediatric subspecialties, as well as hospital managers.



Participants were asked to recommend hospitals in a **subspecialty they were most familiar with** and to recommend hospitals in a second subspecialty. Recommendations for own employer/hospital were not allowed.



Analysis of **nationwide recommendations** for each of the eight subspecialties⁽¹⁾. The recommendations from 2024-2026 were taken into account. Recommendations from the 2024-2025 survey periods were given less weight compared to those from 2026.

REPUTATION SCORE

Available data on American children's hospitals was analyzed

Hospital quality metrics – Part 1

2 Hospital quality metrics – Performance measures

- Hospital quality metrics relevant to each specific medical field provided by **Leapfrog** and by **CMS** were evaluated⁽¹⁻²⁾.
 - Hospital quality metrics from the **Leapfrog Hospital Survey**⁽¹⁾ cover a broad range of safety and quality measures.
 - Data was available for the following groups:
 - Patient Rights and Ethics
 - Medication Safety
 - Adult and Pediatric Complex Surgery
 - Maternity Care (Neonatology specific)
 - Physician and Nurse Staffing
 - Patient Safety Practices
 - Managing Serious Errors
 - Pediatric Care
 - Outpatient Procedures
 - **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)**⁽²⁾ data was available for:
 - Vaccination rates of staff (Influenza)

SCORE FOR HOSPITAL QUALITY

Available data on American children's hospitals was analyzed

Hospital quality metrics – Part 2

2 Hospital quality metrics - Accreditations & certifications

- Several accreditations/certifications/center designations were included in the scoring analysis (where available).
- The following **accreditations, certifications, specialized program enrollments, and center designations**⁽¹⁻²⁾ reflect a range of structural and/or quality requirements which are relevant for the subspecialty rankings:
 - Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)
 - Planetree
 - The Joint Commission (TJC)
 - Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC)
 - Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT)
 - National Association of Epilepsy Centers (NAEC)
 - National Cancer Institute (NCI)
 - National Institute on Aging (NIA)
- In addition to general hospital certifications, available **accreditations/certifications relevant to specific medical fields** (e.g., Advanced Total Hip and Knee Replacement Certification for orthopedic hospitals, Advanced Comprehensive Heart Attack Center Certification for cardiac hospitals) were used.

SCORE FOR HOSPITAL QUALITY

7 (1) Additional information about the accreditations/certifications is available here: [ACHC](#), [FACT](#), [HRSA](#), [NAEC](#), [NCI](#), [NIA](#), [Planetree](#), [TJC](#).

(2) ACHC Accreditation was relevant only for the subspecialties Orthopedics and Neurology & Neurosurgery; FACT Accreditation and NCI designation were relevant only for the subspecialty Oncology; NAEC Accreditation and NIA designations were relevant only for the subspecialty Neurology & Neurosurgery.

Publicly available patient satisfaction data on American hospitals was analyzed

Patient satisfaction data

3 Patient satisfaction

- Patient satisfaction reflects the **quality of care from the patient's perspective**, indicates the quality other patients can expect to receive, and influences a hospital's reputation and financial performance.
- **Evaluations from Google** were researched for each children's hospital as a proxy for patient satisfaction with the hospital.
- Google reviews reflect real patient feedback, provide a standardized rating, and help identify trends in hospital satisfaction over time.
- Children's hospitals are rated up to 5 stars on Google.
- A score was assigned based on the hospital's star rating **relative to all evaluated facilities**.
- Hospitals must have **at least five reviews** to have received a satisfaction score, ensuring a minimum level of feedback.
- To enable comparability across facilities with differing review volumes, facility scores were adjusted using a Bayesian weighted scoring approach that accounts for variation in the number of reviews.

SCORE FOR PATIENT SATISFACTION

The Statista PROMs Implementation Survey collects data directly from hospitals

PROMs Implementation Survey

4 Statista PROMs Implementation Survey

- **Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs)** are defined as standardized, validated questionnaires completed by patients to measure their perception of their functional well-being and quality of life.
- **Survey cycle:** In fall/winter of each year, Newsweek and Statista conduct the **PROMs Implementation Survey**⁽¹⁾ to determine the status quo of PROMs implementation in hospitals, the auditing and reporting of their PROMs data, and whether the data is used to optimize care processes and support therapeutic decisions in real-time.
- Statista has partnered with the **International Consortium for Health Outcomes Measurement (ICHOM)** as a knowledge partner. ICHOM is the world's leading non-profit organization dedicated to the development of standardized measurement of patient-important outcomes. ICHOM promotes the development of the PROMs Implementation Survey, as well as the use of the data from PROMs (and other patient-important outcomes), towards the advancement of value-based healthcare.
- This year, the survey was updated to more comprehensively assess PROMs implementation across several domains and now requires extensive proof documentation⁽²⁾.
- A grading system⁽³⁾ assigning specific weights to all survey questions is used to determine the PROMs implementation score for each participating hospital. The PROMs score, if available, contributes up to 6.5% towards a hospital's total score.
- Additionally, each participating hospital is assigned 1-5 ribbons⁽²⁾ for their level of PROMs implementation, which is displayed in the published lists.
- Future survey cycles will be announced on the [Statista](#) and on the [Newsweek](#) website, as well as sent via e-mail to registered participants. Registrations can be submitted to: hospitals@statista.com or [here](#).

SCORE FOR PROMS IMPLEMENTATION

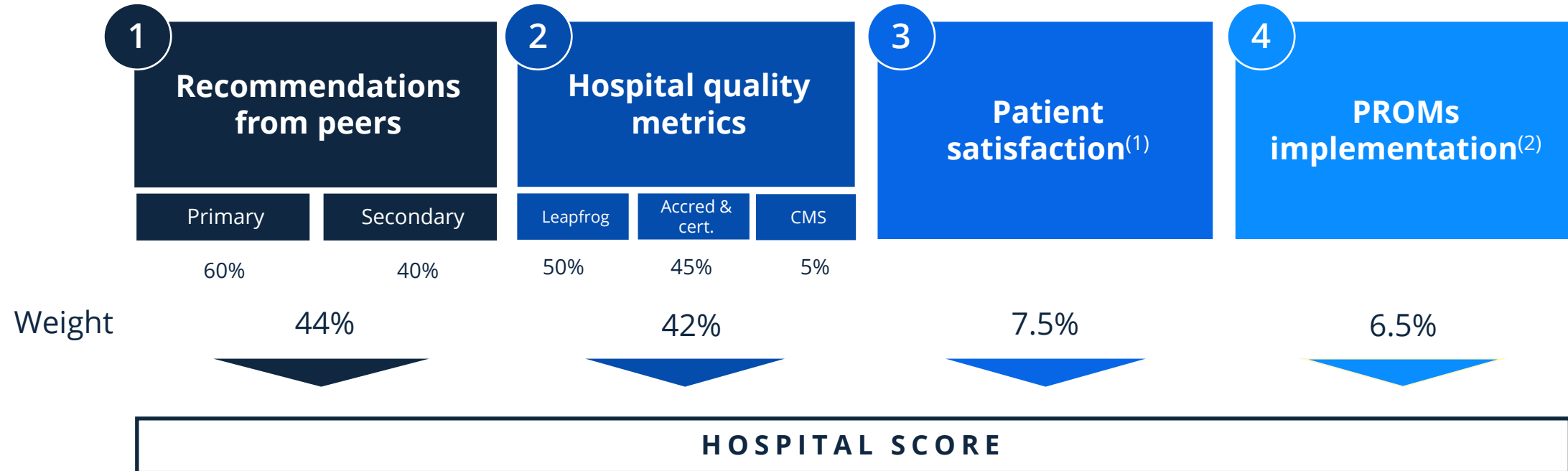
9 (1) For an overview of the specific questions, a PDF version of the PROMs Implementation Survey can be accessed [here](#).

(2) Please note that the survey methodology underwent substantial revision this survey cycle, including stricter proof requirements and a transition from a 3-ribbon to a 5-ribbon scoring scale. As a result, ribbon allocations may differ from previous years even in cases where hospitals have maintained comparable levels of PROMs implementation, as performance is now assessed across a broader and more detailed set of criteria. Please see the *America's Best Children's Hospitals methodology* extended methodology for further information.

(3) A detailed breakdown of the PROMs Implementation Survey methodology, including scoring model, weighting, and ribbon assignment is available in the *America's Best Children's Hospitals* extended methodology.

A score was calculated for each hospital

Scoring model



Primary recommendations from peers (medical and other healthcare professionals within the same subspecialty) account for 60% of the reputation score. Secondary recommendations (e.g., endocrinology recommendations from Neonatologist) have a weight of 40% towards the reputation score.

The top hospitals in 8 pediatric subspecialties were awarded

Final ranking by pediatric subspecialties



Cardiology & Cardiac Surgery

Rank	Hospital	City	State
1	Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago	Chicago	Illinois
2	Boston Children's Hospital	Boston	Massachusetts
3	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford	Palo Alto	California
4	Children's Hospital of Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
5	Cleveland Clinic Children's	Cleveland	Ohio

[...]



Neonatology

Rank	Hospital	City	State
1	Boston Children's Hospital	Boston	Massachusetts
2	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford	Palo Alto	California
3	Children's Hospital of Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
4	Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center	Cincinnati	Ohio
5	Children's National Hospital	Washington	District of Columbia

[...]

LEADING HOSPITALS WERE AWARDED IN EACH SUBSPECIALTY

Statista R, Newsweek, ICHOM and The Leapfrog Group comprise the strong partner network behind the *America's Best Children's Hospitals*

Partner Network



About Statista R

Statista R is a world leader in the creation of company, brand, and product rankings and top lists, based on comprehensive market research and data analysis: Statista R recognizes the best. With a team of over 100 expert analysts and in cooperation with more than 40 high profile media brands across all continents, Statista R creates transparency for consumers and business decision makers and helps companies build trust and recognition across a plethora of industries and product categories. Visit r.statista.com.

Statista R is a division of **statista** . The leading data and business intelligence portal provides an extensive collection of statistics, reports, and insights on over 80,000 topics from 22,500 sources in 170 industries. Find out more at statista.com.

Newsweek

About Newsweek

Newsweek is a premier news magazine and website that has been bringing high-quality journalism to readers around the globe for over 80 years.

Newsweek provides the latest news, in-depth analysis and ideas about international issues, technology, business, culture and politics. In addition to its online and mobile presence, Newsweek publishes weekly English print editions in the United States, Europe/Middle East/Africa and Asia as well as editions in Japanese, Korean, Polish, Serbian and Spanish.

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Statista R, Newsweek, ICHOM and The Leapfrog Group comprise the strong partner network behind the *America's Best Children's Hospitals*

Partner Network



About ICHOM

The [International Consortium for Health Outcomes Measurement](#) (ICHOM) is the leading non-profit dedicated to transforming healthcare by focusing on what truly matters to patients.

They accomplish this by empowering patient and clinical leaders to standardize important clinical, quality of life, function and experience results for health care, and enabling transparent large-scale use to achieve patient-centric health system transformation.

ICHOM's standardized 'sets' of patient-centred outcomes measures help all actors in healthcare design, deliver and evaluate care based on outcomes that matter to patients. To date, ICHOM has developed 45 outcome measure sets for conditions. The sets are available in IT-ready interoperable formats and have been implemented in 500+ care settings in 42+ countries.



About The Leapfrog Group

The Leapfrog Hospital Survey was created and is administered by [The Leapfrog Group](#), a leading independent, national not-for-profit organization advocating for hospital transparency.

They strive to make giant "leaps" forward in the U.S. by promoting transparency through their data collection and public reporting initiatives.

With their goal of saving lives by reducing errors, injuries, accidents, and infections, The Leapfrog Group focuses on measuring and publicly reporting hospital performance through the annual Leapfrog Hospital Survey. The survey is a trusted, transparent and evidence-based national tool in which over 2,400 hospitals voluntarily participate free of charge.

The Leapfrog Group advocates for public access to quality and safety data from all U.S. hospitals.

Legal disclaimer for the ranking *America's Best Children's Hospitals*

Disclaimer

The rankings are comprised exclusively of hospitals that are eligible regarding the scope described in this document. A mention in the ranking is a positive recognition based on peer recommendations and publicly available data sources at the time. The ranking is the result of an elaborate process which, due to the interval of data-collection and analysis, is a reflection of the last calendar year. Furthermore, events preceding or following the period 04/04/2025–04/03/2026 and/or pertaining to individual persons affiliated/associated to the facilities were not included in the metrics. As such, the results of this ranking should not be used as the sole source of information for future deliberations.

The information provided in this ranking should be considered in conjunction with other available information about hospitals or, if possible, accompanied by a visit to a facility. The quality of hospitals that are not included in the rankings is not disputed.